STATE OF THE GAME

OUR EXCLUSIVE DIVISION-BY-DIVISION ANALYSIS

THE BIBLE OF BOXING

RING®

HALL OF FAME 2014

OSCAR DE LA HOYA

AT PEACE WITH HIMSELF, CAREER

P.0

MAN OH MANNY

PACQUIAO PROVES HE ISN'T FINISHED

P.76

THE RING REMEMBERS RUBIN CARTER, MICKEY DUFF

P.80

25TH ANNIVERSARY:

THE HALL'S EVOLUTION

P.48

BEST I FACED:

FELIX TRINIDAD

P.20

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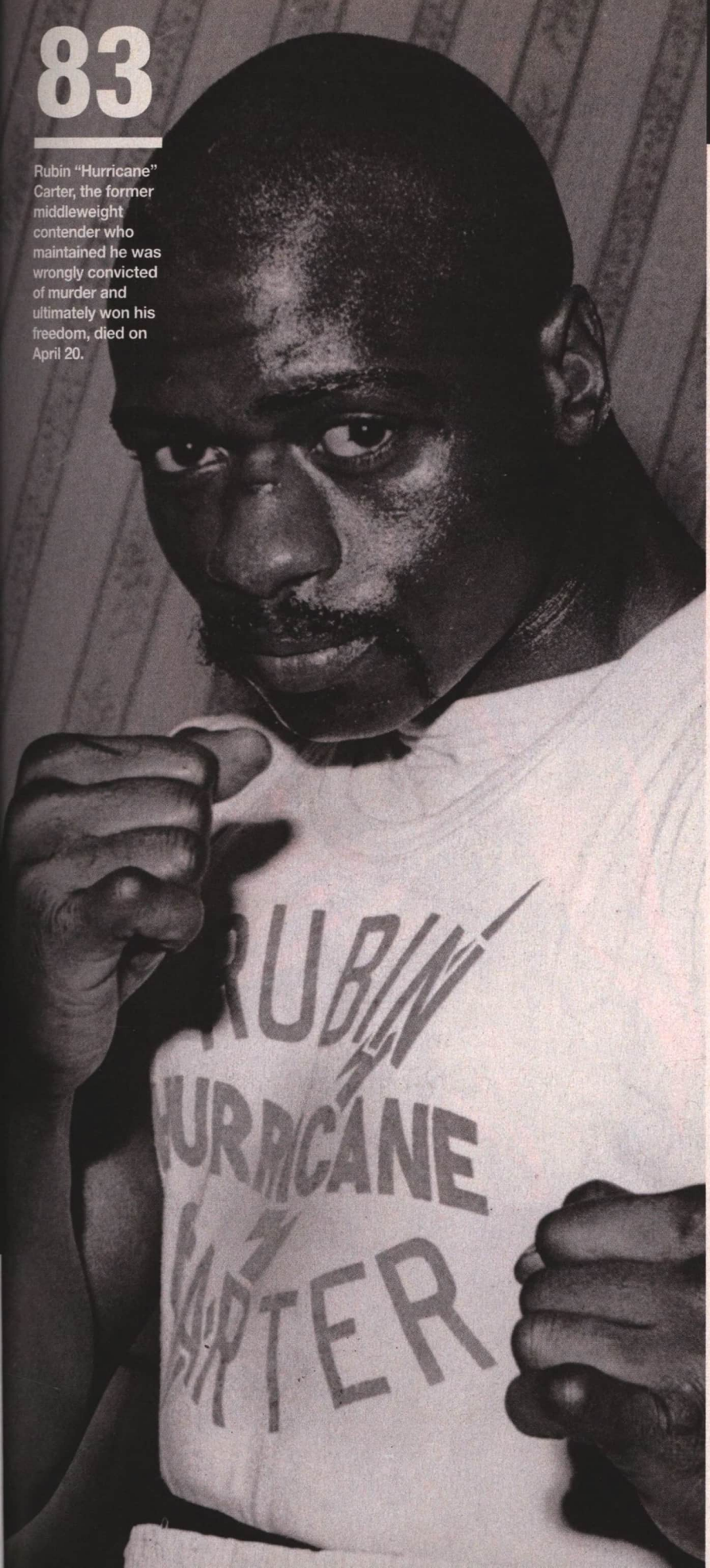

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Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, the former middleweight contender who maintained he was wrongly convicted of murder and ultimately won his freedom, died on April 20.

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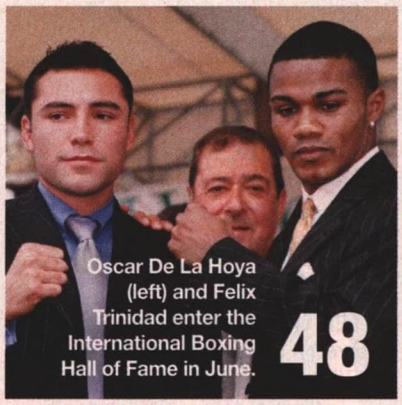

Oscar De La Hoya (left) and Felix Trinidad enter the International Boxing Hall of Fame in June. **48**

HALL OF FAME

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Unbeaten junior featherweight Shelly Vincent overcame daunting challenges with the help of boxing.

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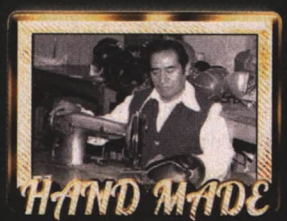

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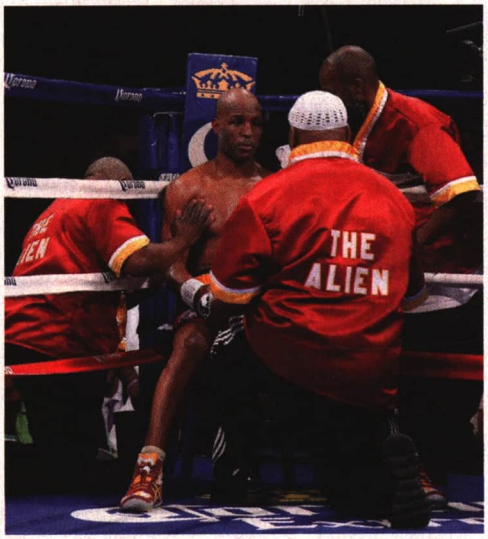

His Excellency Bernard Hopkins left us shaking our heads once again after his convincing victory over Beibut Shumenov on April 19.

BHop made a major light heavyweight titleholder almost half his age look desperate with his three decades of experience, his ring intelligence and more than enough physical ability at 49 to follow his brain's instructions.

No one, not even Floyd Mayweather Jr., understands the sweet science better than the marvelous Executioner-turned-Alien.

That's why THE RING Magazine editors knew exactly who to approach after we decided to reinstitute something akin to Perfect Execution, the feature in which Hopkins used to give step-by-step boxing lessons on our pages.

And Hopkins being Hopkins – one of the most accessible fighters in spite of his success – readily agreed to take part even as he was preparing for the Shumenov fight.

Regular contributor Joseph Santoliquito arrived at Joe Hand's Gym in downtown Philadelphia one Saturday in March to get material for six installments of the feature, starting with the jab in this issue. The plan is to meet with Hopkins every six months so we can give you Perfect Execution year round.

Santoliquito felt fortunate to play a role in the project.

"Bernard is like a professor," he said. "You get a tingle up your spine as he breaks this stuff down. He makes you see things that you normally wouldn't see. He's a true master. And the man took time out of his training for a major fight to spend time with us. We were there for around four hours.

"He doesn't have an entourage, doesn't show up in a limo. You don't have to get through a thousand people to get to him. He's a true treasure."

Perfect Execution will look a lot like it did in the past, with photos illustrating the moves Hopkins explains. We have an added feature this time around, though: video.

RingTV.com's videographer, Bill Emes, worked side by side with Santoliquito while Hopkins demonstrated and explained the fundamentals of the sport, which will allow you to watch and listen to Hopkins as he goes through his moves.

Just scan the QR code on Page 27 or go to http://bit.ly/1mNWeH8, which will open the video page, and soak it all in.

We believe the new version of Perfect Execution provides you with an unusual tool to understand what you're seeing when you watch a fight or to improve your technique if you box. And our friend Bernard Hopkins made it possible.

The RING

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Dionesia Dapidran-Pacquiao, Manny Pacquiao's mother, left nothing to chance as her son prepared to face Tim Bradley on April 12 in Las Vegas.

Peter Quillin (right) remained unbeaten but still without a defining victory after his one-sided decision over Lukas Konecny to retain his WBO middleweight title on April 19.

Bernard Hopkins was far too elusive for Beibut Shumenov in their light heavyweight title-unification bout on April 19 in Washington, D.C.

KUDOS TO PACQUIAO

I have to tip my hat to Manny Pacquiao for his win over tough Tim Bradley. I had the fight three rounds apiece going into the seventh round. Then I watched a more mature Manny really box the brakes off Bradley for the rest of the fight. I had a little trepidation for Manny going into the rematch. It appeared to me as long ago as the Sugar Shane Mosley fight that he was slipping a bit. I attributed it to all the wars he has been in since 2002. But he is a special fighter and his focus and determination were there in the rematch with Bradley. It was the best he has looked since the Antonio Margarito fight. That being said, in my opinion, he would not be able to defeat "Money" Mayweather if they were to fight.

Dave Maez
Aurora, Colo.

NO SURPRISE

Manny Pacquiao's victory over Tim Bradley told most of us what we already knew, that Pacquiao was the clear winner of both fights and still has a lot left in the tank. Manny defeated a tough, younger, undefeated boxer in Bradley. He took Bradley's best punches, neutralized his quickness, and clearly outboxed him in the second half of the fight. If he gets another fight with Juan Manuel Marquez and defeats him in similar fashion or stops him, Manny would certainly deserve yet another "Fighter of the Year" award for avenging losses against two dangerous opponents. Meanwhile, Floyd Mayweather Jr. continues to duck a fight with Manny, has recently dodged Amir Khan and has never even hinted at any interest in legitimate opponents such as Danny Garcia, Sergio Martinez, Bradley or even Devon Alexander. Instead he chooses to fight Maidana, who lost to Khan and is yet another flat-footed, wide-punching slugger who fights with his face out in front of him. Mayweather has used retirement, false allegations of steroid use, pricing himself out of the fight, demands that Pacquiao drop Bob Arum and Manny's recent losses (and victories) as excuses to dodge Pacquiao. Kudos to Manny for taking on dangerous opponents and giving the fans what they truly want and deserve.

Ron Stecher
Lincoln, Mass.

CREDIT DUE

For the past decade, every time Manny Pacquiao won a big fight, I would hear reasons from so-called experts as to why the victory was not impressive. The opponent was "past his prime," "coming off a loss," "just tried to survive" or "they fought at a catchweight." None of those reasons can be used in the Tim Bradley rematch. Bradley was an undefeated champion in his prime and Top 3 pound for pound. There was no catch weight, and "Desert Storm" was trying his best to knock Manny's block off. Those "experts" should give credit where credit is due and accept the fact that Pacquiao is a special, once-in-a-generation fighter.

Victor Rivero
Pacifica, Calif.

HURRICANE

Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, who recently passed away, was like a cat with nine lives. He went from petty criminal, to top notch boxer, to convicted murderer, to being a folk hero (after being freed from prison when it was determined that he was wrongly convicted), to being an author, to being a humanitarian who devoted the rest of his adult life to helping other wrongfully convicted criminals.

Kenneth L. Zimmerman
Huntington Beach, Calif.

MARTINEZ BY KO

My belief is that Miguel Cotto's best nights in boxing came at welterweight while Sergio Martinez's came at middleweight. Because of that natural size difference and the fact that Cotto is prone to fade late in fights while Martinez comes on strong during the championship rounds, I can see only one outcome on June 7: Martinez stopping Cotto late.

Ross Finlayson
Scotland

MARTINEZ BY KO II

Miguel Cotto is in way over his head against Sergio Martinez. This older, puffed up (at 160 pounds), slower version of Cotto will be no match for the fleet-footed, though older Martinez. And puh-lease don't feed me that "But didn't you see Cotto his last time out against Delvin Rodriguez?" nonsense. We all know that Rodriguez is a C fighter at best. We've seen Cotto fair well against some decent southpaws (Zab Judah and Chop Chop Corley), but against world class southpaws like Manny Pacquiao and Austin Trout, he took L's. This fight will mirror those. More specifically, I see it playing out similarly to the Pacquiao fight. Martinez will be too fast, lighting the slower, smaller man up with combinations to the head and body. Cotto will get off in spots to the body and land a couple of good left hooks to keep the crowd in it before he tires out at the higher weight and gets pummeled to a late stoppage.

Kevin Moragne
Greensboro, N.C.

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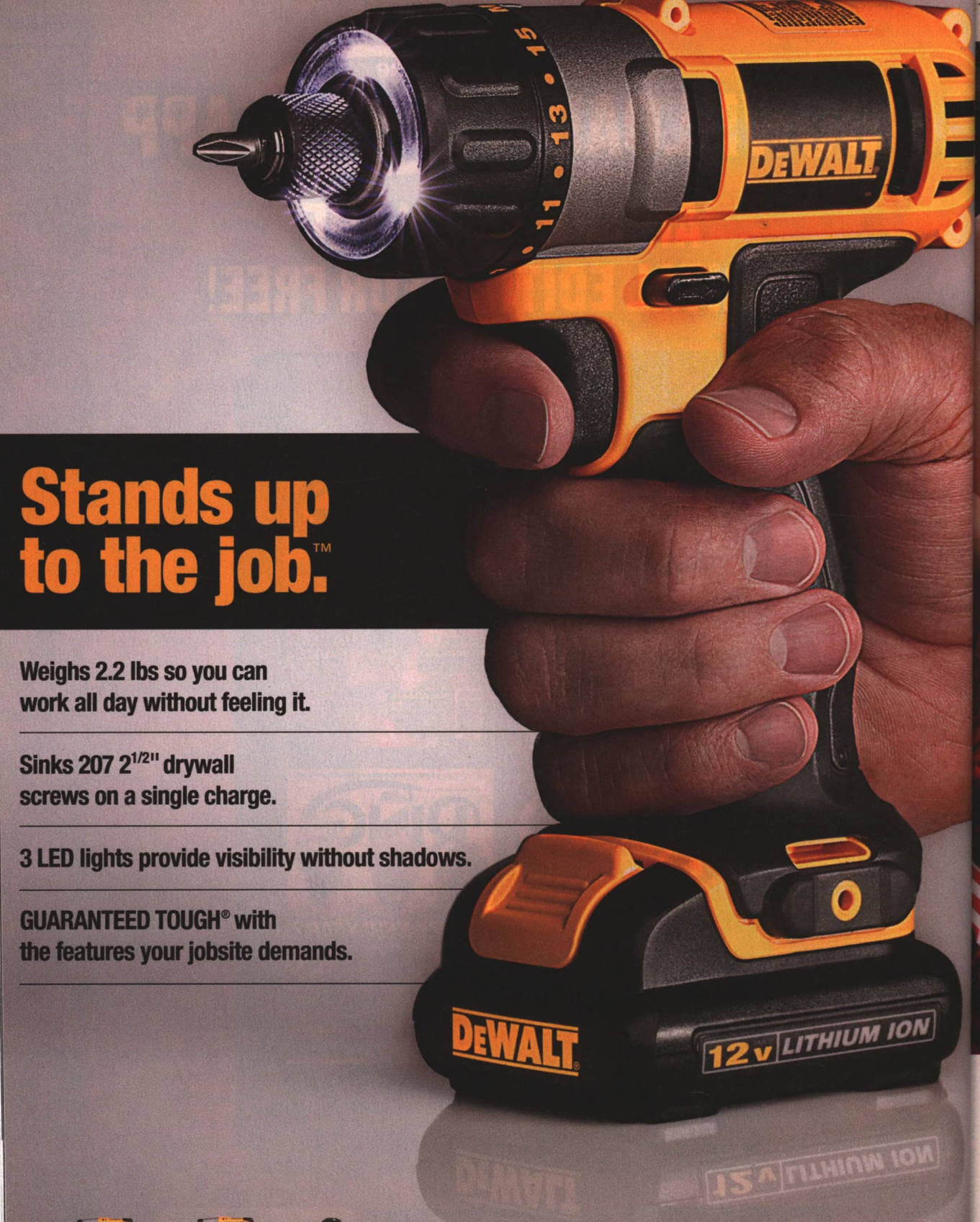

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The pitfalls of open scoring were on display during the fight between Danny Garcia (left) and Mauricio Herrera in March.

JABS & STRAIGHT **WRITES**

BY THOMAS HAUSER

OPEN SCORING ALL WRONG

ANNOUNCING TALLIES DURING THE FIGHT ONLY LEADS TO TROUBLE

The March 15 title bout between Danny Garcia and Mauricio Herrera in Puerto Rico was an interesting and competitive fight. But it was tarnished by the judges and by what the WBC calls "open scoring."

Under open scoring, the judges' scores are announced to the crowd after the fourth and eighth rounds. Most athletic

commissions in the United States refuse to use it. But the governing commission in Puerto Rico allows it.

There are several problems with open scoring.

First, a fighter who knows that he's comfortably ahead late in a fight will be even more tempted to hold and run than is currently the case.

Second, as a fight progresses, a judge whose scorecard is at odds with those of the other judges might try to bring his or her card closer to the others rather than score on the basis of what he or she is seeing in the ring.

Third, under open scoring, judges might be even more susceptible to crowd intimidation than they are now.

And last, open scoring eliminates the drama inherent in the time-honored tradition of announcing the result at the end of a fight.

In Puerto Rico, Herrera was competitive with Garcia from the opening bell. All four Showtime commentators who scored the fight – Al Bernstein, Steve Farhood, Paulie Malignaggi and Brian Kenny – gave the nod to Herrera.

But the judges scored it differently. After four rounds, Garcia had a 40-36, 39-37, 38-38 edge. After eight rounds, it was 78-74, 77-75, 75-77.

It's bad enough for fans to have a bad decision thrown in their faces after a fight. It's worse to know that mischievous forces are at work while a fight is unfolding.

In the end, Garcia was awarded a 116-112, 116-112, 114-114 majority-decision triumph.

"It was a good fight," Malignaggi said afterward. "It's too bad that two of the judges missed it."

Forget about open scoring. Boxing needs competent, honest scoring. ★

Bob Arum

has been known to lash out at adversaries. But part of the promoter's charm is that he says what he thinks about his own fighters, too. That was on display at a recent press conference in New York.

Asked if he would advise Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. with regard to which trainer he should hire, Arum answered, "Chavez is not the kind of guy you advise which trainer he should go to. You advise him to go to a trainer and hope you at least get that accomplished."

Then Arum came down hard on Mikey Garcia and Orlando Salido for failing to make weight for championship fights. He opined, "This whole idea of fighters weighing in the day before a fight is insane. If they weighed in on the day of a fight, instead of dehydrating so much, they'd fight at a higher weight class like they did in the old days when boxing was boxing."

That led to Arum being asked if he thought boxing should go back to 15-round championship contests.

"I was against the change to 12 rounds when it happened," he said. "But I don't see any reason to go back to 15. Fifteen rounds might be less exciting because the fighters would be pacing themselves more."

Then Arum got a look in his eyes that signaled something good was coming.

"Besides," he added. "It's bad enough watching Guillermo Rigondeaux for 12 rounds. Who wants to watch 15?" ★

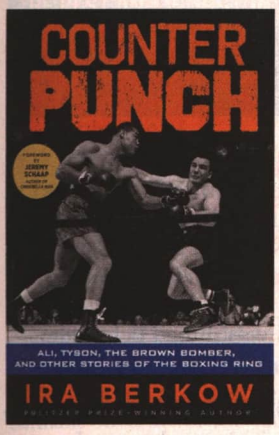
Will Anthony Joshua be different?

Recognizing that athletes were getting bigger, the Golden Gloves added a super heavyweight division for competitors over 201 pounds in 1982.

Bigger but not better. Not one National Golden Gloves super heavyweight champion has enjoyed a distinguished pro career to date.

The National Golden Gloves super heavyweight champions of the new millennium have been:

2013	Nicholas Cuesta
2012	Andrew Coleman
2011	Cam Thompson
2010	Roberto Morban
2009	Lenroy Thompson
2008	Tor Hamer
2007	Nathaniel James
2006	Felix Stewart
2005	Gregory Corbin
2004	Raphael Butler
2003	Travis Walker
2002	Malcolm Tann
2001	Lonnie Zaid
2000	Steve Vukosa



Counter Punch **(published by Triumph Books) is a collection of 84 columns that Ira Berkow wrote about boxing for *The New York Times* and the Newspaper Enterprise Association between 1967 and 2005.**

Berkow wrote with a nice, and sometimes cutting, touch. After Mike Tyson was knocked out by Buster Douglas, the scribe wondered if Iron Mike might henceforth refer to himself as "the second baddest man on the planet."

Writing about the star-studded crowd that attended the second fight between Joe Frazier and George Foreman, Berkow recounted, "Elizabeth Taylor was at ringside. She once held the title of Beauty Champion of the World, and she may still lay claim to it but not in very many states. She has had for years a problem with making the weight. There is a roundness to her face and a figure that could stand some roadwork."

Berkow also has an ear for good quotes. A few of my favorites are:

Jack Dempsey: "Some people still call me champ. I was champ for six years, 1919 to 1926 – that's seven years, isn't it? That's long enough. But they're nice people. You know, 'Hiya, champ. Hiya, champ.' Still makes me feel good."

Joe Louis: "Jackie [Robinson] is my hero. He don't bite his tongue for nothing. I just don't have the guts, you might call it, to say what he says. And I don't talk so good either. That's for sure."

Trainer Whitey Bimstein (bemoaning the dwindling ranks of Jewish fighters): "Now that any kid can get a job, they got no ambition."

Jake LaMotta (while working as a bouncer in a strip club before *Raging Bull* turned his life around): "I love women, but I'm turned off here. You seen one topless broad, you seen 'em all."

British promoter Mickey Duff (referencing Larry Holmes just before Holmes fought Mike Tyson): "Doesn't he look good? There are three ages of man: young, middle age, and doesn't he look good."

Roy "Cookie" Wallace (after being knocked down four times en route to a sixth-round stoppage at the hands of Bob Foster): "I got up from three knockdowns by the champ. Not many men can say that."

Hasim Rahman (after Lennox Lewis said that Rahman had knocked him out with a "lottery punch"): "There are more Powerballs where that one came from."

Andrew Golota (when it was pointed out that he had arrived for an 11 o'clock interview at 11:58): "But is still 11."

Sandy Saddler (12 years after retiring from boxing): "I'm fine and well off. You know it couldn't be any other way, because bad news travels fast, and no one ain't heard nothing about me." ★

QUICK QUIZ

« **1.** WHO WAS JOHN SHOLTO DOUGLAS?

2. JAMES JEFFRIES WON A 25-ROUND DECISION OVER TOM SHARKEY IN A HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP FIGHT ON NOV. 3, 1899 AT CONEY ISLAND IN BROOKLYN, N.Y. WHAT RECORD WAS SET THAT DAY?

3. WHO HAD A LONGER REACH, FEATHERWEIGHT CHAMPION SANDY SADDLER OR HEAVYWEIGHT KING ROCKY MARCIANO?

QUICK QUIZ ANSWERS:
1. Douglas was the ninth Marquess of Queensbury and one of the founders of the Amateur Athletic Club in England. In the mid-1860s, he lent his name to rules that would become the guidelines for modern boxing. ★ 2. Jeffries-Sharkey had a live gate of $60,300, the largest of any fight in history until that time. ★ 3. Saddler's reach exceeded Marciano's, 70 inches to 68.

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book (*Reflections: Conversations, Essays, and Other Writings*) has just been published by the University of Arkansas Press.

A MONTHLY BOXING LIST

No one will forget Howard Cosell's famous call.

10

This month: The last time we gave you classic quotes in this space was in the December 2012 issue. Here are 10 more from an endless list.

FRANK BRUNO: "Boxing is just show business with blood."

"BARBADOS" JOE WALCOTT: "The bigger they are, the harder they fall."

MIKE TYSON: "Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the face."

« HOWARD COSELL: "Down goes Frazier! Down goes Frazier! Down goes Frazier!"

JOYCE CAROL OATES: "Boxing is a celebration of the lost religion of masculinity all the more trenchant for its being lost."

MUHAMMAD ALI: "I'm so fast that last night I turned off the light switch in my hotel room and was in bed before the room was dark."

GEORGE FOREMAN: "The question isn't at what age I want to retire, it's at what income."

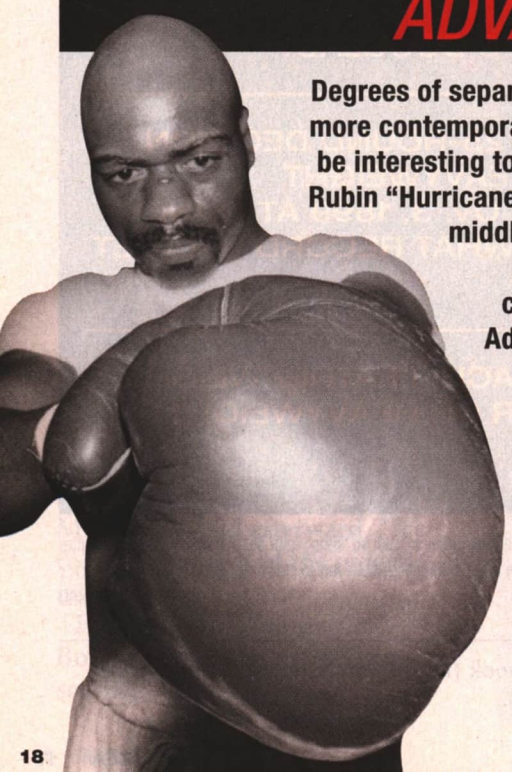
LARRY HOLMES: "All fighters are prostitutes and all promoters are pimps."

WHITEY BIMSTEIN: "Show me an undefeated fighter, and I'll show a guy who's never fought anybody."

JOE LOUIS: "They can run, but they can't hide."

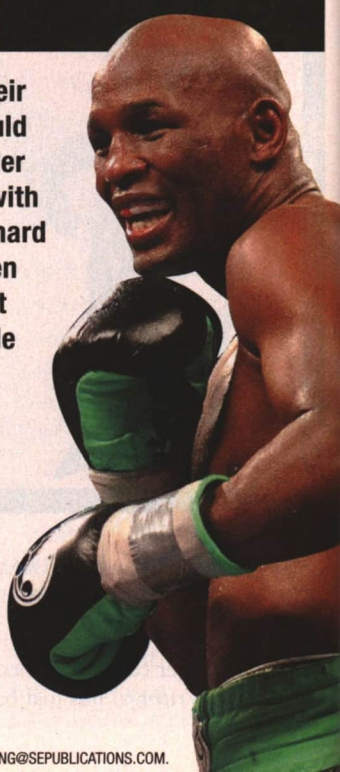
NOTE: Bob Fitzsimmons is typically credited with saying "The bigger they are, the harder they fall," but many sources indicate that Walcott used the term before him.

ADVANCED DEGREES



Degrees of separation between fighters of the past and their more contemporary counterparts. THE RING thought it would be interesting to try to link the late middleweight contender Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, who fought from 1961 to 1966, with middleweight and light heavyweight great Bernard Hopkins. We did so in seven steps. We then challenged reader Gregg Morgan, a whiz at Advanced Degrees, to do it in fewer steps. He came through, doing it in only five.

« **RUBIN CARTER** fought ...
EMILE GRIFFITH, who fought ...
VITO ANTUOFERMO, who fought ...
LARRY MCCALL, who fought ...
JOE LIPSEY, who fought ...
BERNARD HOPKINS »



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GOOD, BAD, WORSE

THE BEST AND WORST IN BOXING FROM THE PAST MONTH

By **Michael Rosenthal**

GOOD

The United States had more heavyweights in THE RING Top 10 than any other country at the time this was written. That might not mean much given Wladimir Klitschko's dominance and the questions surrounding the three Americans, No. 6 Chris Arreola, No. 9 Deontay Wilder and No. 10 Bryant Jennings. Still, as a boxing fan who grew up watching the likes of Muhammad Ali and Mike Tyson, I'm optimistic that Yanks might again hold their own in the sport's glamour division. You'll know by the time you read this how Arreola did in his rematch with Bermane Stiverne for the vacant WBC title. Arreola has talent and fire in the ring but spotty results. Jennings, who was scheduled to fight the capable Mike Perez on May 24, seems to be rounding into a good heavyweight but is still developing. I'm most excited about Wilder. The 6-foot-7 Alabaman is the least polished of the three but has the kind of punching power that stops opponents and wins fans. The point? We Americans have hope.

BAD

It seems we could fill the magazine each month with items about judges who turn in inexplicable cards. We don't want to bore you with the same material month after month. At the same time, we want to bring as much attention as possible to poor scoring in hopes it will lead to improvement. This month's worst card was turned in by Gustavo Padilla after the Bernard Hopkins-Beibut Shumenov fight on April 19. The Panamanian, who has more than two decades of experience, somehow turned a one-sided victory by Hopkins into a split decision by scoring the fight for Shumenov 114-113 (seven rounds to five). The only advantage Shumenov had was that he threw more punches than Hopkins, which doesn't mean much when so few land. We all know who won that fight and that Padilla did a poor job. As a result, we're instituting here and now a new feature that we'll call POOR JUDGE-MENT, a list of horrible scorecards that we'll continually update. Padilla's card is the first entry. It won't be the last.

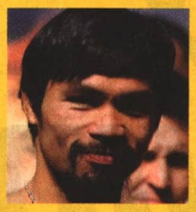
WORSE

We lost two significant boxing figures this past month, Rubin "Hurricane" Carter and Mickey Duff. We could've lost a third. Former 130-pound titleholder Carlos Hernandez, one of my favorite people in boxing, suffered a rattlesnake bite on his leg while running the evening of April 23 and was rushed to a hospital. His leg swollen and numb, he received morphine and other drugs for the pain as well as several vials of antivenom. He struggled for a few days but the antivenom ultimately did its magic and "Famoso" recovered. No surprise that he battled through it. I'll never forget his fight against Vicente Escobedo in 2009, his last one. Many were concerned going into the fight because Hernandez had taken so much punishment in recent bouts. And it started poorly for Hernandez, who took some hellacious shots early. However, instead of folding, he gave one of the most courageous performances I've ever seen. He not only survived but nearly won a pitched battle of wills. The crowd – and normally jaded writers – gave him a standing ovation afterward. No rattler is going to take him down.

FIGHTERS' FAVORITES

WHAT BOXERS ARE INTO OUTSIDE THE SPORT

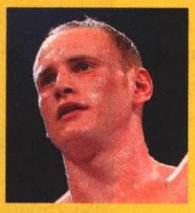
By **Anson Wainwright**



MANNY PACQUIAO

WBO welterweight titleholder

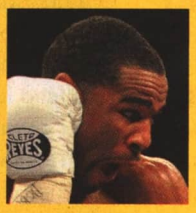
MUSIC – "Shakira, Bee Gees and Ashanti." ★ **CAR –** "Mercedes Benz 350SL is my favorite one to drive." ★ **FOOD –** "Steamed white rice, grilled steak cooked well done, grilled or steamed asparagus and broccoli, grilled or broiled fish, beef broth, fresh melon and bananas." ★ **TATTOOS –** "On my left shoulder I have the names of my wife and children and on one forearm a streaking comet." ★ **ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING –** "Carmelo Anthony." ★ **MOVIE –** "Authentic Chinese martial arts movies. Bruce Lee is a favorite." ★ **VIDEO GAME –** "*Temple Run.*"



GEORGE GROVES

Super middleweight contender

MUSIC – "My favorite band are Green Day. I do like The Black Keys and Arcade Fire." ★ **CAR –** "I drive an Audi S8. Dream car would be a Mercedes SLR." ★ **FOOD –** "I love Iranian food, but it piles on the weight. I have grown to love salads, too, and chocolate is my weakness." ★ **TATTOOS –** "I have a large tattoo on my stomach and lots of lucky charm tattoos on my arm." ★ **ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING –** "Andy Murray because tennis looks hard graft. Usain Bolt because I believe he's clean and unstoppable. And Mo Farah because he's a tremendous athlete and a cool, down to earth guy." ★ **MOVIE –** "I have loads. *Snatch, The Departed, Troy, Goodfellas, Shawshank Redemption and of course Rocky.*" ★ **VIDEO GAME –** "I never play any video games, but if I'm in an arcade, it's always Pac-Man."



LAMONT PETERSON

IBF junior welterweight titleholder

MUSIC – "Slow Dance." ★ **CAR –** "I drive a Dodge Charger. I'd most like to have a Ferrari or an Audi R8." ★ **FOOD –** "Pizza and tacos." ★ **TATTOOS –** "I have two. One says 'Team Pete' and the other is a pharaoh." ★ **ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING –** "Lebron James." ★ **MOVIE –** "*Troy.*" ★ **VIDEO GAME –** "I play all sorts of games. It would be hard to pick one."

RING POLL

A MONTHLY POLL OF OUR RINGTV.COM READERS

RingTV.com readers evidently believe in BHop? We asked: **What would be the result of a fight between Adonis Stevenson and Bernard Hopkins?** Here is how you responded.

THE PERCENTAGES:

HOPKINS BY DECISION 43.21

STEVENSON BY KO 33.20

STEVENSON BY DECISION 16.88

HOPKINS BY KO 4.82

DRAW 1.89

GETTY CENTRAL PHOTOGRAPHY IMAGES; HOPKINS: MAURICE METEYER/GETTY IMAGES; PACQUIAO: JEWEL SAMAD; GROVES: SCOTT HEAVEY; PETERSON: PATRICK SMITH

By Anson Wainwright

FELIX TRINIDAD

Felix Trinidad will be remembered as one of the biggest-punching welterweights in history and an icon in his native Puerto Rico.

"Tito" burst onto the scene as a 20-year-old in 1993 when he relieved Maurice Blocker of his IBF welterweight title in devastating fashion, knocking Blocker out cold in the second round.

It was the start of a fantastic run that saw Trinidad become one of the most popular fighters of his generation – in Puerto Rico and beyond – because of his success, exciting fighting style, charisma and humility.

Trinidad would make 15 successful defenses of his welterweight title, second only to Henry Armstrong's 18, and reigned a division-record seven years. Among his victories during that run, he stopped Oba Carr and Yori Boy Campas, and outpointed Pernell Whitaker, Oscar De La Hoya and countryman Hector Camacho Sr.

The De La Hoya fight, in which he took the WBC belt from boxing's "Golden Boy," was at the time the biggest non-heavyweight fight ever in terms of pay-per-view buys at 1.4 million.

Trinidad would vacate his welterweight throne and make a brief pit stop at junior middleweight in 2000, when he took the WBA crown from David Reid and stopped Fernando Vargas in perhaps his most spectacular performance to win the IBF title. The banner year saw Trinidad win THE RING Fighter of the Year award.

He then stopped William Joppy to win the WBA middleweight belt in his home-away-from-home, Madison Square Garden in New York, giving him a world title in a third weight class.

Trinidad (42-3, 35 knockouts) would go 2-3 in his final five fights, losing badly to Bernard Hopkins, Winky Wright and Roy Jones Jr., but he had already established his International Boxing Hall of Fame credentials. He'll be inducted this June.

Interestingly, with all of Trinidad's great victories, he considers his loss to Jones his best performance. Trinidad lost widely on the cards and went down twice.

"This match could have been declared in favor of either of us, even with the knockdowns," he said through a translator. "It was a very tough and close match for 12 rounds. I fought a fighter that had been a heavyweight champion, and it was the biggest weight I fought at.

"Also, the fight with Fernando Vargas, which is one of the classics of boxing. The people from HBO sent me a letter like a week after the fight congratulating me and saying that it was the best fight in 25 years that they had televised on their network."

Trinidad fought most of the best between 147 and 160 pounds but said he would have liked to face Julio Cesar Chavez and Terry Norris.

"I had signed a contract to fight Chavez, but it never happened," he said.

Today, Trinidad makes occasional public appearances – often at schools – and spends time cultivating fruit and vegetables in his garden.

He graciously agreed to speak with THE RING about the best he faced in 10 key categories.

BEST BOXER

Roy Jones Jr.: I have great respect for Roy Jones. He is a

complete boxer with tremendous skills. He has fast, strong hands and incredible reflexes.

BEST JAB

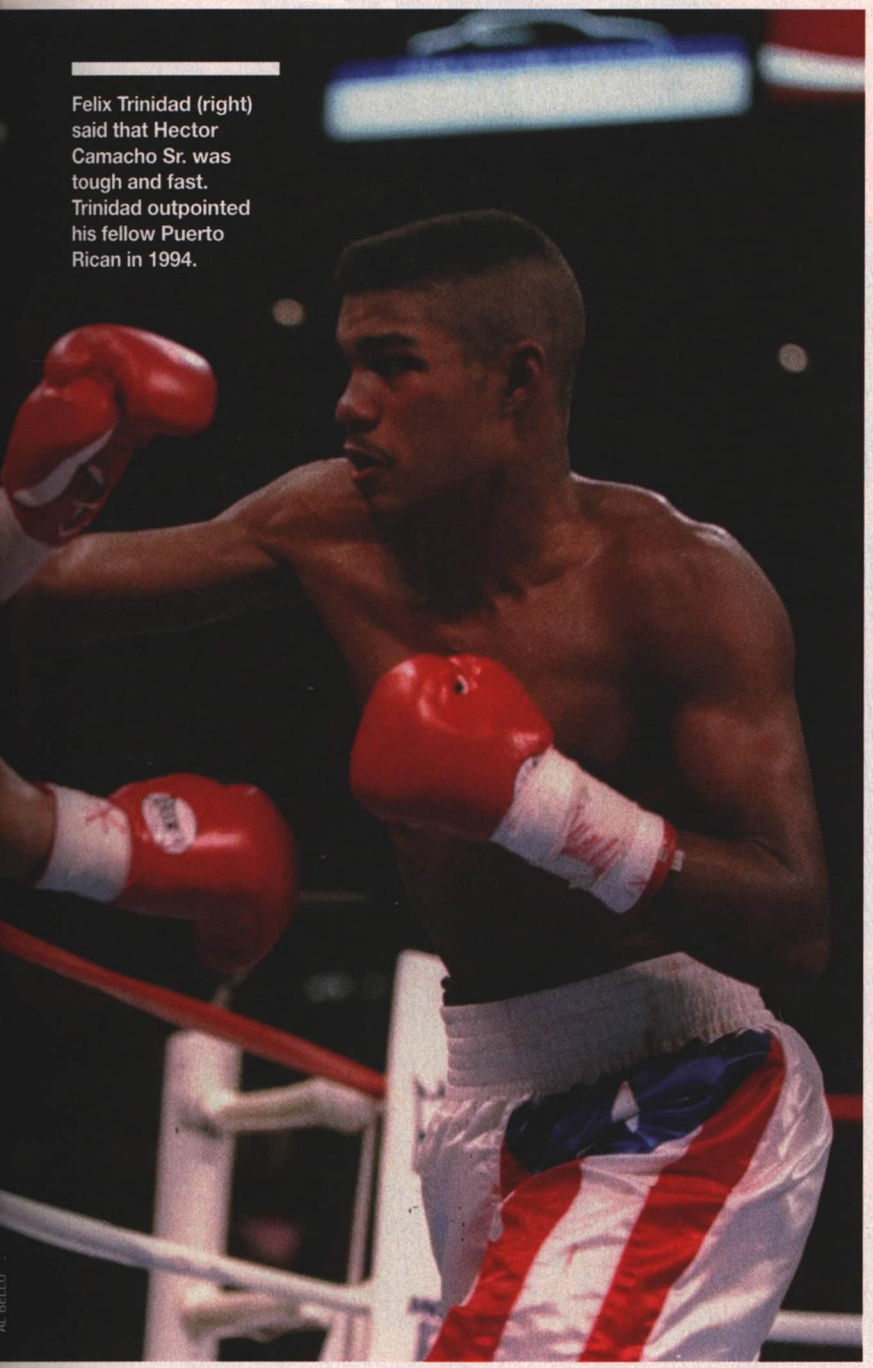
Winky Wright: Of all the boxers that I fought, the boxer that best used the jab is Winky. His jab bothered me all night.

BEST DEFENSE

Pernell Whitaker: When boxing experts discuss who the best defensive fighters are, the name of Pernell Whitaker is always in the conversation. We knew that he was very good defensively, so we came prepared for the fight. I am the only one that has beaten Whitaker convincingly. I won 11 of the 12 rounds.

BEST CHIN

Hector Camacho Sr.: He was never knocked out in his whole career, and he fought good punchers. I remember that I wasn't able to knock him out, but he got to feel my punch and I hurt him twice. He is one of the best Puerto Rican fighters to step in the ring.



Felix Trinidad (right) said that Hector Camacho Sr. was tough and fast. Trinidad outpointed his fellow Puerto Rican in 1994.

AL BELLO

BEST PUNCHER

David Reid: I should say besides me. David Reid had the power to knock me out, he hit hard. When I fought him, he hit me with some good punches in the early rounds. He won an Olympic gold medal by a knockout even with the fact that in amateurs you fight with headgear and the gloves are more cushioned, which made the punches less powerful.

FASTEST HANDS

Camacho: You know he was known for his quickness in the ring. Of the boxers I fought, I have to go with Camacho. He had fast hands and a good jab.

FASTEST FEET

Camacho: It was hard to cut the ring off when I fought him. He was skillful. His fast feet also helped him when he was hurt and made it hard to hit him.

SMARTEST

Whitaker: Whitaker was the smartest. To go the distance with me he had to be intelligent. He used his small height as an advantage, bending down almost to the floor, and he knew when to grab on.

STRONGEST

Reid: As I said, he hit hard, but he is also physically strong.

BEST OVERALL

Jones: I fought the best of the best, but if I had to choose one, it needs to be Roy Jones. He is one of the most dominant boxers in the last decade and he went on to become heavyweight champion.

WE SHARE THE BLAME

THE FACT THAT FANS CONTINUE TO LAY OUT MONEY EVEN THOUGH WE DON'T GET THE FIGHTS WE WANT CONTRIBUTES TO THE PROBLEM

We are part of the problem because we refuse to take part in a solution.

Sure, we've faulted the fighters and their egos for not wanting to give up too much in negotiations and not wanting to get too little, for refusing to travel, for seeking too much money, and for not being willing to give a prospective opponent a shot.

We've pointed our fingers at the stubbornly childish promoters who overprotect their interests and whose "cold war" has long been detrimental to the sport. We've understood the consequences of the competition between networks. We've made the mysterious and powerful boxing adviser Al Haymon into a villain.

It has been so easy for us to assign blame for the fights that can't get made or simply don't get made. Those bouts include the white whale that was Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. Manny Pacquiao and the potentially delayed duel between light heavyweight sluggers Adonis Stevenson and Sergey Kovalev, never mind numerous other matches that very well would've excited had they ever existed.

But here's the thing: They get away with all of this because we allow them to. We're figuratively paying for it because, well, we literally still pay for it.

We didn't get Mayweather-

Pacquiao because the two sides couldn't agree, and they dug in their heels because they didn't have to make a deal, not when we've continued to contribute to their eight-figure paydays through our pay-per-view and ticket purchases.

Stevenson is willing to hold out for more money for a Kovalev fight and perhaps burn bridges with HBO because the alternative is just as viable and possibly even more lucrative. He can fight on Showtime and hope to face Bernard Hopkins later this year because he knows that his fans in Quebec will still show up, he knows Showtime will pony up the money, and Showtime knows that we will watch.

Fighters such as Floyd Mayweather Jr. might take more risks in choosing opponents if fans didn't buy into less-than-ideal matchups.

ED MULHOLLAND/THE NEW YORK TIMES/REDUX/VIA GETTY IMAGES

We almost always watch. We rarely speak with our remote controls and our wallets. We refuse to miss out on major events. We cannot resist this sport, even if this sport does so much to resist us.

At least Pacquiao and Mayweather have each been in interesting matches in the past few years, and at least Stevenson vs. Hopkins would be an intriguing pairing. Yet on far too many other occasions we are subsidizing substandard products, losing out on first-rate programming and settling for second-best or worse, all because something is better than nothing when it comes to sating our hunger for The Sweet Science — even if The Sweet Science is leaving a sour taste in our mouths.

Even worse is when our fandom for a fighter means we think like a manager, reciting and justifying the many excuses for why a certain bout against a certain opponent should not happen. Some of us have even latched onto individual sides in the promotional rivalry between Golden Boy and Top Rank or the network competition between HBO and Showtime, treating this as the boxing version of *Twilight*'s Team Jacob and Team Edward, all of which is fitting, as this monstrosity is sucking us dry.

I believe in supporting the men and women who put themselves in danger partially for their own enrichment and partially for our entertainment. But if you want the biggest and best fights to happen and wonder why so many of them don't, it's because we are the fools who continue to be parted with our money.

★

Even though the result this time was rightly in his favor, Manny Pacquiao still seems to lose when he wins.

The storylines following Pacquiao's rematch victory over Timothy Bradley weren't solely involving a clear decision over one of the best welterweights in the world and one of the better boxers in the entire sport. Rather, people also wondered why Pacquiao hadn't been able to knock Bradley out. They asked whether Pacquiao still would've triumphed had Bradley not hurt one of his legs and had Bradley stuck to the game plan that had brought him early success. They noticed that this older Pacquiao is not quite the Pacquiao of old.

His past performances are apparently a hard act to follow.

The bar was raised with four particular wins, starting with his stoppage of David Diaz and continuing through his drubbing of Oscar De La Hoya, his clubbing of Ricky Hatton and his clobbering of Miguel Cotto. Those brought him four wins in three weight classes, but people still attached a "yeah, but" when describing them.

Yeah, Diaz was a titleholder, but he was slow and made-to-order, they said. Yeah, De La Hoya was once a huge star, but he was a drained shell of himself. Yeah, Pacquiao knocked Hatton cold to become the 140-pound champion, but Hatton was a limited mauler who ran into the punch. Yeah, Cotto was very good, but Cotto had to drop a couple pounds to meet the catchweight.

It continued. Pacquiao didn't stop the defensive Joshua Clottey. He beat up Antonio Margarito but forced Margarito to make 150. He took yet another close and arguable decision in the third fight with Juan Manuel Marquez. And then came the robbery loss in the first Bradley fight and the one-punch knockout defeat in the fourth Marquez bout.

Manny Pacquiao evidently competes against both his opponents and the fighter he once was.

Suddenly people were asking if Pacquiao was done, a silly question given whom the losses came against and how, and given that they followed a run that no one else at the time had come close to matching. That question was shown to be all the sillier when people watched Pacquiao outbox a handpicked opponent in Brandon Rios and then asked if he was back.

Neither question was necessary. Yes, the 35-year-old Pacquiao appears to be slipping somewhat, but that's because he was at such a high level before. He might not be the whirlwind he once was, active for the entire three minutes of every round. Now he's picking his spots instead of picking his foes apart.

Then again, the styles do matter, as do the circumstances. There are certain opponents who will not be subject to the same kind of punishment that Cotto and Margarito were. And it's no surprise that the Marquez knockout means Pacquiao is increasingly aware of getting caught with a counter.

The Bradley win was a great one, even if it wasn't a gripping one. As much as we want to contrast the Pacquiao of the present with the Pacquiao of the past, the more apt comparison is to look at how Pacquiao measures up with, and against, his fellow fighters.

He may never again match the best of what he once was, but he still belongs in against the best of who there still is.

By **Brian Harty**

Felix Trinidad is engaged in a different kind of fight.

BROKEN BOND

Felix Trinidad earned almost $90 million over the course of his multiple-division reign yet was somehow staring at a bank balance on the other side of zero in April. The culprit, he alleged, was **Jose Ramos**, his former translator. Now called a financial planner, Ramos had for some years been exclusively entrusted to nuture the Trinidad fortune.

Initial reports portrayed Ramos as a financial neophyte who foolishly invested all of Tito's eggs in a single, flaming basket. A complaint filed in Puerto Rico by the Trinidads presented a more complex, Bernie Madoff-esque figure. The common ground seems to be this: Tito got hosed.

Basically the complaint alleged Ramos was using Trinidad's money to buy government bonds, which he then used as collateral to extend credit lines, which he used to buy more securities, all the while profiting from transaction fees and commissions. When the bonds market in Puerto Rico collapsed late last year, Trinidad was stuck with tens of millions in worthless investments and tens of millions more in credit debt. Numbers in the press put his total loss as high as $63 million.

Ramos denied the allegations and said the truth will come out. In the meantime, Puerto Rico's Banco Popular relaxed a demand that Tito immediately pay off $2.9 million of the debt.

In Mexico, former junior middleweight champ **Canelo Alvarez** angrily dissolved his relationship with longtime broadcast partner **Televisa** after he was accused of causing the December 2013 death of then-sparring partner **Javier Jauregui**. With the foundation of its bold theory attributed to "**a witness**," Televisa-owned magazine *TV y Novelas* claimed the 40-year-old Jauregui had absorbed too many blows as Alvarez prepared to meet **Alfredo Angulo** on March 8. Alvarez covered Jauregui's funeral costs after the former lightweight titleholder died of a stroke.

Tony Ayala Sr., who trained his four sons – Tony Sr., Mike, Paulie and Sammy – as well as former titleholders Jesse Benavides, John Michael Johnson and Gabby Canizales, died at 78 on April 10 in San Antonio as a result of complications from diabetes.

Amid increasingly severe tensions with Russia, former heavyweight **Vitali Klitschko** withdrew from the presidential race in Ukraine to lend his support to a single opposition candidate, **Petro Poroshenko**. The situation was still developing at press time. Meanwhile, Russian and Ukrainian fighters got along just fine at the World Series of Boxing quarterfinals in Moscow.

There wasn't much peace at brother **Wladimir Klitschko's** press conference for his fight against **Alex Leapai** on April 26. American heavyweight **Shannon Briggs** showed up, whipped off his shirt and called Wladimir out. Klitschko said, "I'm gonna eat your fist," Briggs did a Hulk-like flex ... it was weird.

And who was that crazy sorceress seen on the April 12 HBO pay-per-view broadcast slingshotting hexes at **Tim Bradley** from ringside? Oh, that was **Manny Pacquiao's** mom, **Dionesia**, whose antics immediately went viral on the internet. Not that Manny needed any magical assistance. He had already received the blessing of former President **Bill Clinton**, who called Pacquiao "a great role model" on the Jimmy Kimmel Live! show.

Another boxing fan you might not expect: **Pablo Picasso. Cecile Eluard**, the 95-year-old daughter of French surrealist poet **Paul Eluard**, happily recalled in a recent interview going to fights with the cubist painter and family friend, whom she described as "so absolutely not abstract!"

Even more surreal was Republican senator **Elbert Lee Guillory** opposing an anti-cockfighting bill in Louisiana because it might endanger "a legitimate sport known as chicken boxing." That's right, chickens wearing gloves instead of razor blades fight each other while ringside veterinarians watch carefully. Just like real boxing! A confused Sen. J.P. Morrell, the Democrat who introduced the bill, replied, "I have no knowledge whatsover on chicken boxing." That makes all of us.

Arthur Abraham knows animals, though. Dangerous ones. And heavy metal. The super middleweight titleholder (at least at press time) adopted a baby Persian leopard named Shiva at the Berlin zoo, then posed with the indifferent cat while holding a sign saying "*Mein Pate ist Arthur Abraham*" (My Godfather is Arthur Abraham). Abraham also announced that German heavy metal band **Edguy** would play as he walked in for his May 3 fight against Nikola Sjekloca. In the past, his walk-ins have featured live perfomances by **The Scorpions**. Rock on, King Arthur.

Corona™ Extra

★ BOXING ★

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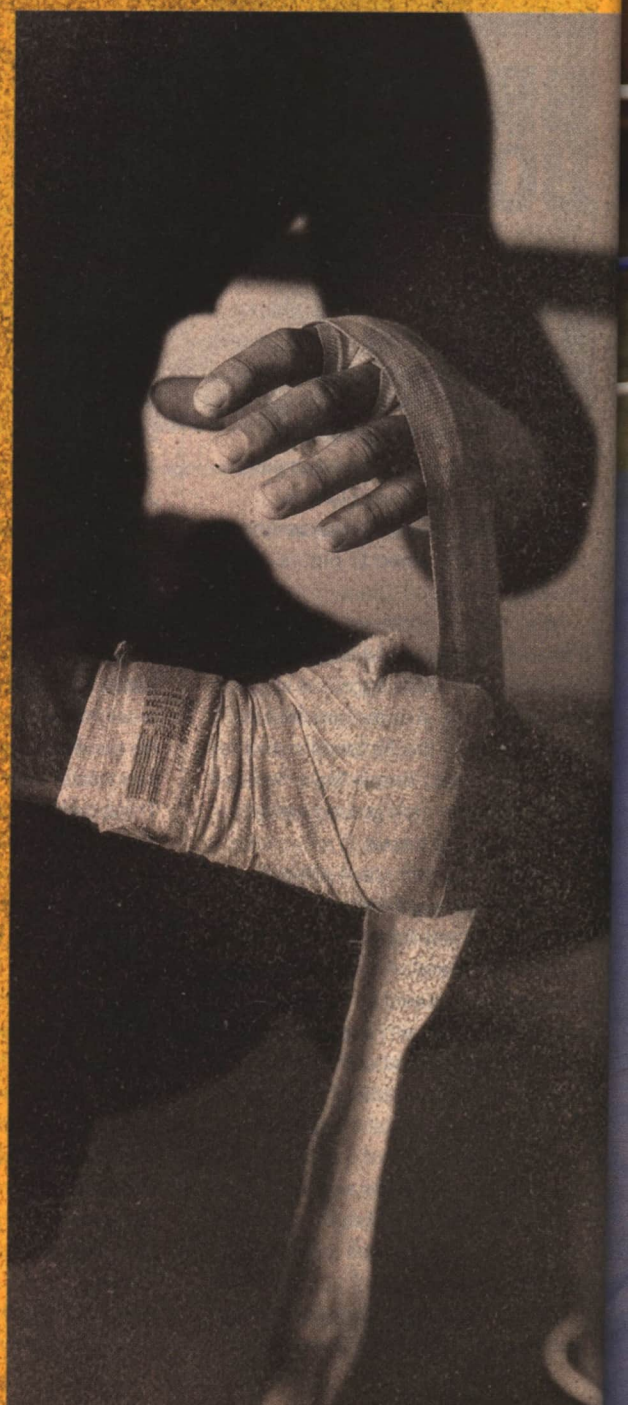

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THE JAB

YOU WORK EVERYTHING OFF THE JAB

By **Joseph Santoliquito**

Good boxing demands good technique. A missed step here, an off-balance shot there, and you could be looking up from the canvas. The sport is as much about foot positioning as it is punching power. It's a ballet of fists and feet, of the whole body functioning as one. To achieve that, one must master the fundamentals.

Perhaps no one today has a better understanding of the basics than future Hall of Famer Bernard Hopkins, which is why we asked him to play the leading role in a resurrected version of "Perfect Execution."

Each month in THE RING Magazine, Hopkins will demonstrate a particular skill and explain how to execute it. Photographs of Hopkins and assistant Danny Davis will help you understand the moves.

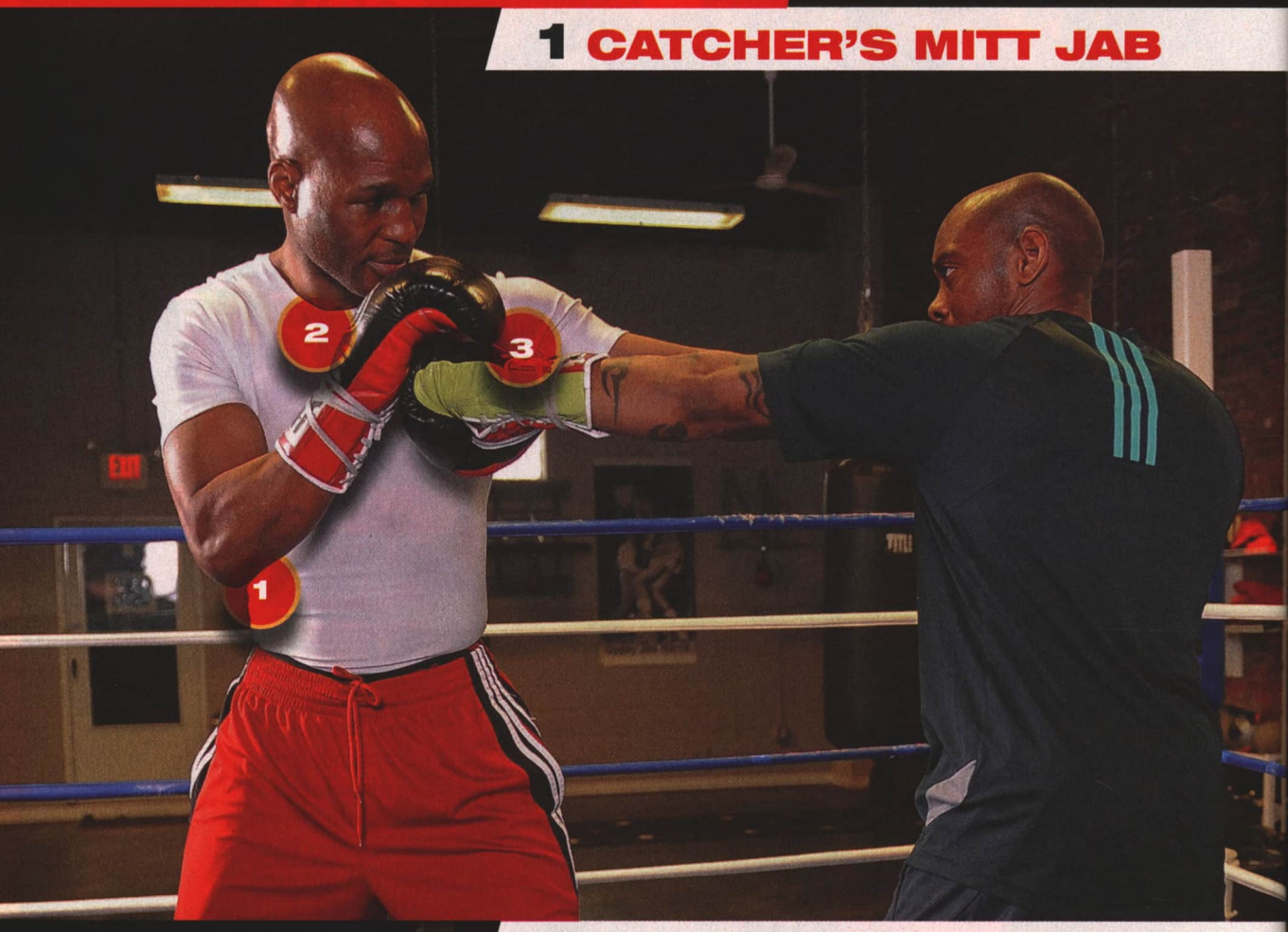
Also, for the first time, we will have an accompanying video on our website, RingTV.com, which will allow you to watch and listen as Hopkins imparts his wisdom.

This month: The jab, the most basic punch that sets up all other blows. »

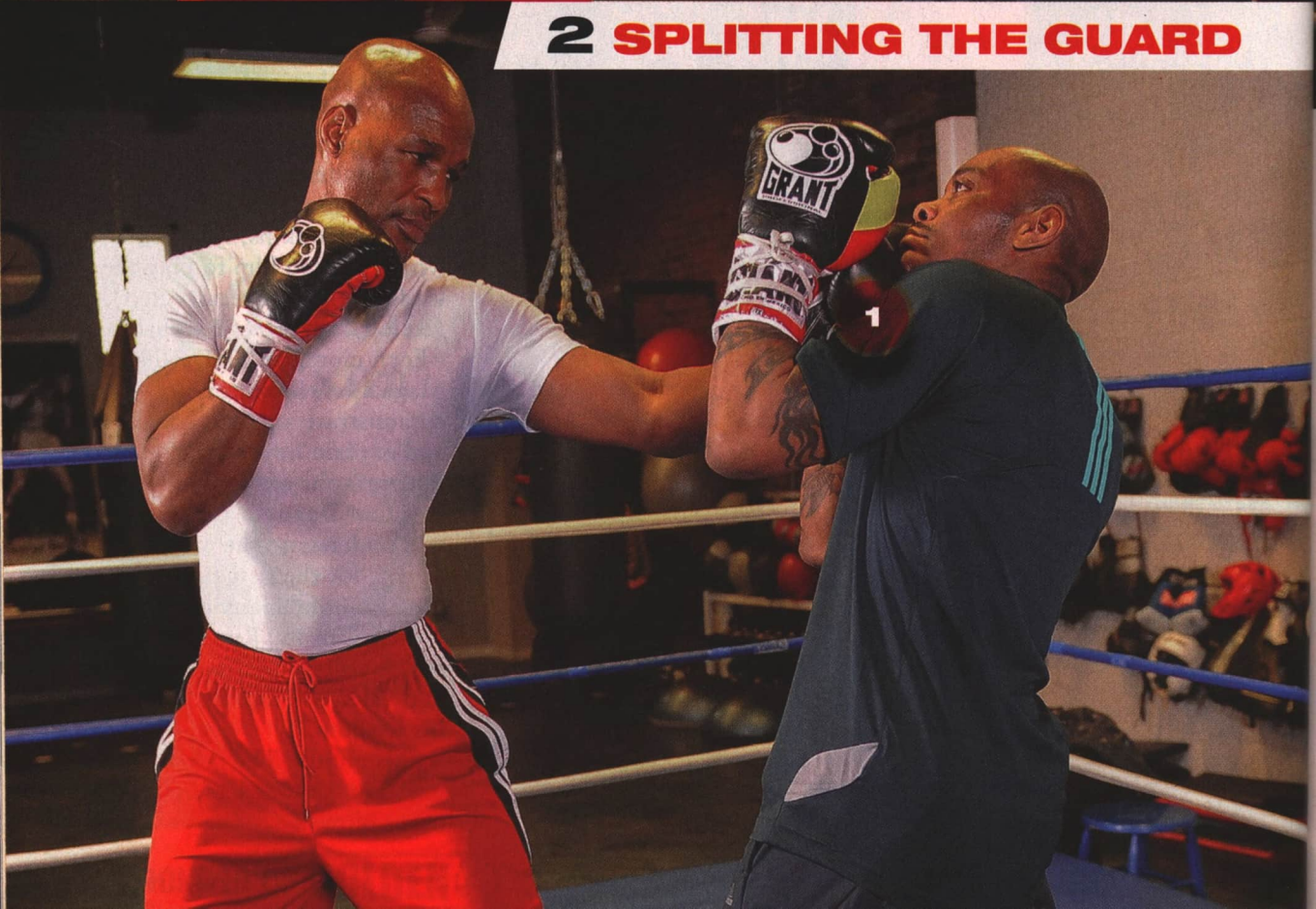
IT'S BACK

Bernard Hopkins' popular how-to series on boxing fundamentals returns in this issue and will appear each month. We've added a video component to the feature. To watch and listen to Hopkins giving instruction, just scan the QR code above or go to http://bit.ly/1mNWeH8.

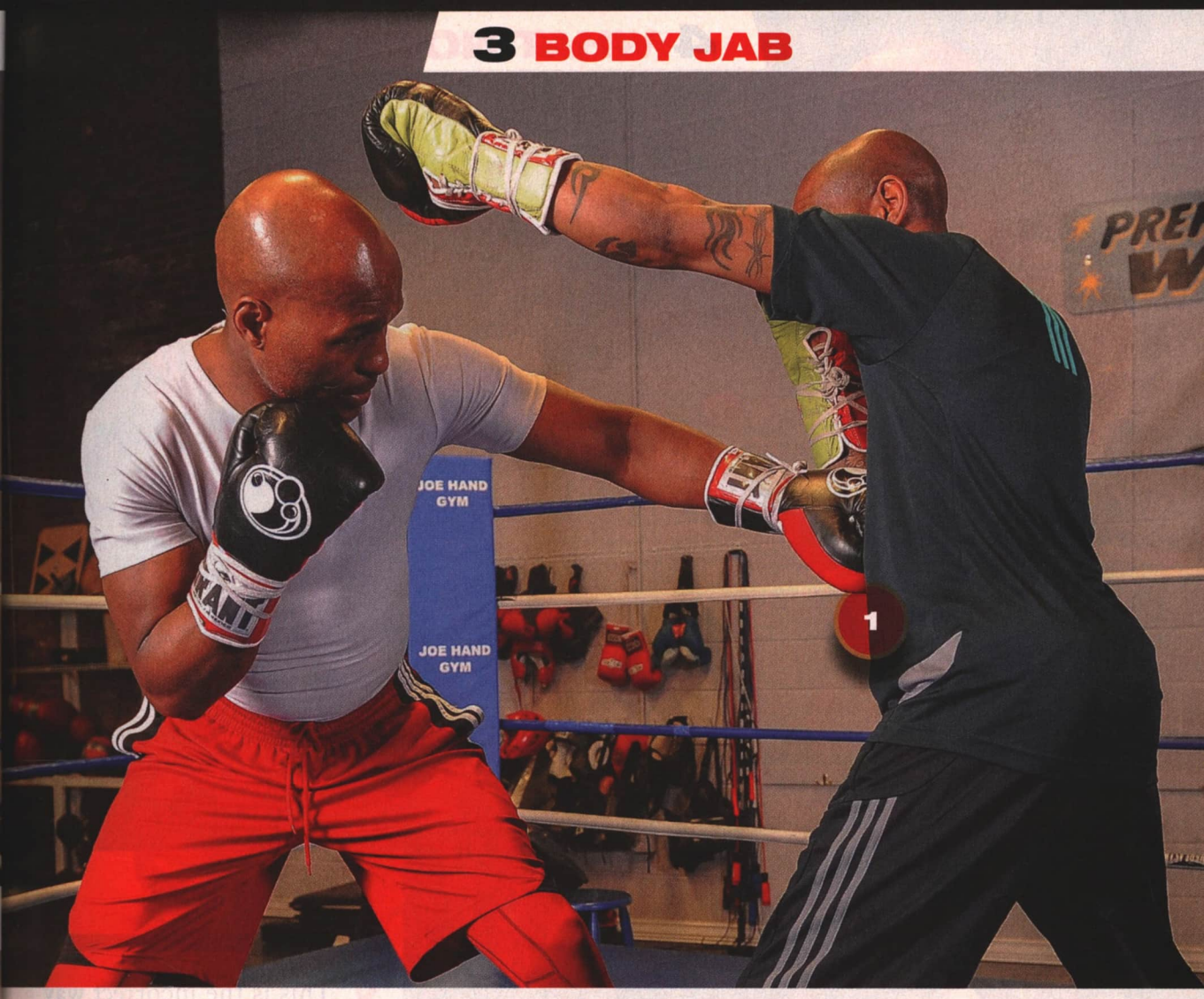
1 CATCHER'S MITT JAB



2 SPLITTING THE GUARD



3 BODY JAB



LESSON 1

"You work everything off the jab, defense and offense. You don't see me get countered with anything my opponent might throw. ❶ It matters where my elbow is, tucked tight to my body, ❷ and where my chin is. Notice that's tucked in tight, too. This is what I call the catcher's mitt jab. ❸ I caught Danny's jab and I countered with my jab. You can counter to the torso or to the face."

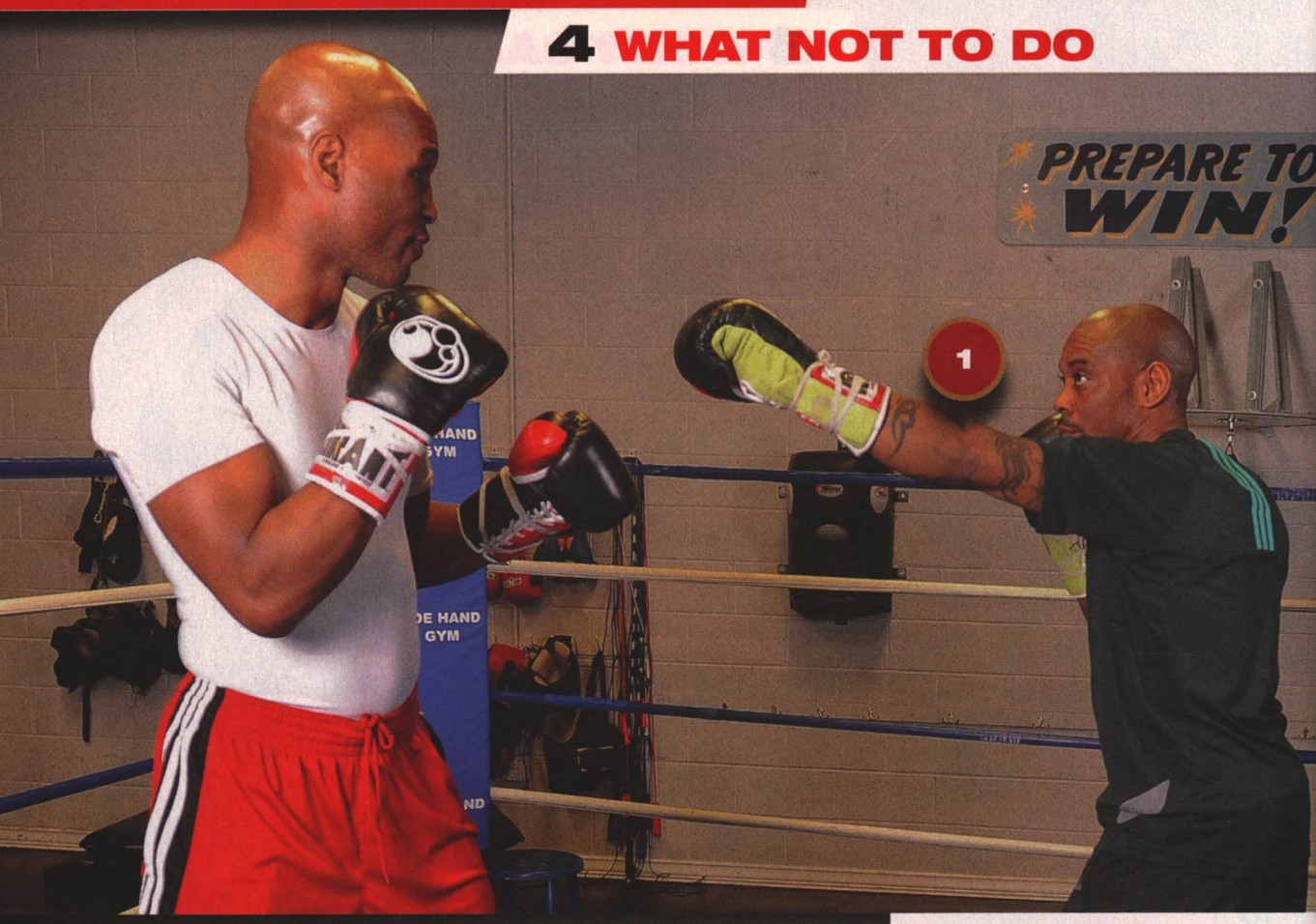
LESSON 2

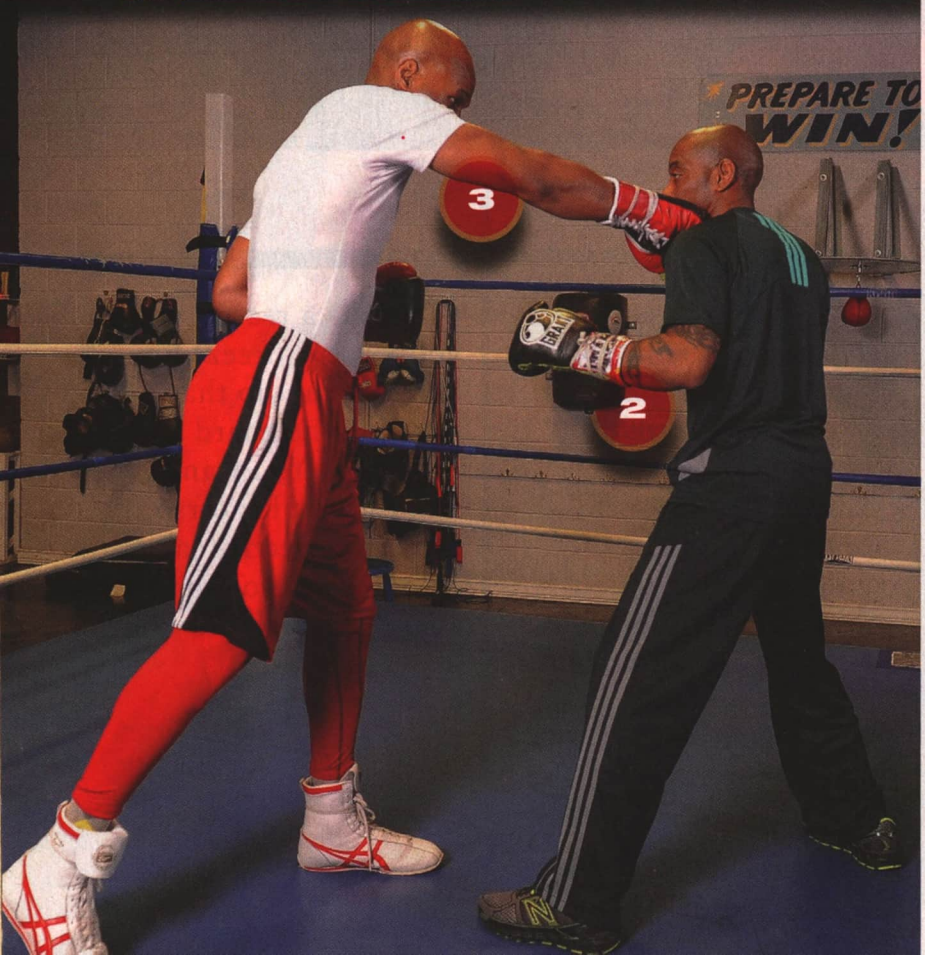
"When a guy has a tight defense and you're coming in, you have to time him and come in straight with your jab. Again, everything works off the jab. It's your sword. ❶ Here, I come up on an angle, as you'll notice here what I'm doing with Danny. You want to break up their guard. That pops the head out of the guard. You can set up everything after that."

LESSON 3

"There is a reason why you want to freeze him, and you can do that with splitting the guard with the jab. ❶ You want to aim right at his torso. This is a very effective jab with an aggressive opponent coming straight at you."

4 WHAT NOT TO DO





LESSON 4

❶ "This is the incorrect way to throw a jab, because you can easily get countered off of it. If you don't bring back your jab fast enough, you can get in some trouble. ❷ Notice here, when Danny pulls his jab back, he brings back his left hand low. I see the opening and can quickly counter off of that. Be aware that when you throw the jab, it has to come back fast to where it originally started. ❸ If it's brought back down, you can counter off the top of that. It's how Max Schmeling caught Joe Louis the first time they fought." ★

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Manny Pacquiao might not be the fighter he once was but he was still too good for Tim Bradley.

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

MANNY PACQUIAO

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Think about what Manny Pacquiao did in his rematch against Tim Bradley on April 12 in Las Vegas.

The Filipino hero was 35, one fight removed from a one-punch knockout loss and perceived to be in decline. He was facing a gifted, undefeated opponent

who was in his prime and on everyone's pound-for-pound list. At best, this was a 50-50 proposition for Pacquiao, who might've faced the end of his career had he lost.

And what did the old man do? He turned in a dominating performance, winning a one-sided decision that no one – including Bradley – would dispute.

Pacquiao (56-5-2, 38 knockouts) might not be what he once was but, at maybe 80 or 90 percent, let there be no doubt that he remains formidable. As in their first fight, which Bradley won by a controversial decision, Pacquiao was too good and too quick for what we can now call an inferior opponent. He was busy, accurate in spite of Bradley's defensive skills and in command for most of the fight. Particularly striking were his defensive numbers: Bradley connected on only 19 percent of his punches in their first fight, only 22 percent in the rematch, well below the welterweight average, according to CompuBox. (Pacquiao connected on 35 percent.)

Bradley had his moments but moments generally don't win fights. No, it was Pacquiao's night. I won't suggest that it was his *greatest* night. It's hard to top his victories over Oscar De La Hoya and Ricky Hatton when he was at his peak.

At the same time, given the facts going into the fight, this will be remembered as one of the most important victories of his career.

POUND FOR POUND: Manny Pacquiao (No. 7 last month) regained some old ground, rising to No. 4 after beating Tim Bradley by unanimous decision (even Bradley agreed this time). Bradley (No. 3 last month) fell to No. 5, and Wladimir Klitschko (No. 4 last month) was elevated to cover the vacancy. Juan Manuel Marquez held his spot at No. 6, with Sergio Martinez (No. 5 last month) dropping to No. 7.

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Odlanier Solis (No. 7 last month) lost a split decision to unrated veteran Tony Thompson, who has become somewhat of a gatekeeper. Solis dropped off the list, and undefeated American Bryant Jennings took the No. 10 spot.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No change.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Bernard Hopkins (No. 1 last month) had nowhere to go on the list after unifying two titles, but Beibut Shumenov fell from No. 4 to No. 6 after a humbling 12 rounds with The Alien. No. 5 Juergen Braehmer and No. 6 Chad Dawson both moved up a notch as a result.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Curtis Stevens dropped from No. 8 to No. 9 after a dubious, come-from-behind stoppage of unrated Tureano Johnson in Philadelphia. Marco Antonio Rubio gained a spot, from No. 7 to No. 6, after a 10th-round knockout of Domenico Spada (unrated). It was the 36th 12-rounder of Rubio's career.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Pacquiao (No. 3 last month) returned to his home at No. 1 with the conclusive win over Bradley, who dropped from No. 1 to No. 2 and pushed Marquez from No. 2 to No. 3. Shawn Porter then jumped from No. 6 to No. 4 after a fourth-round stunner against Paulie Malignaggi, who was bumped from No. 8 to the brink at No. 10.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Undefeated Las Vegan Jessie Vargas arrived in the ratings at No. 8 after a unanimous decision over Khabib Allakhverdiev (No. 7 last month) on the Pacquiao-Bradley card. Allakhverdiev dropped to No. 9, and No. 10 Selcuk Aydin was pushed off the list.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: No change.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Scott Quigg (No. 6 last month) rose to No. 4 after swiftly dismissing Tshifhiwa Munyai (unrated) with an impressive second-round knockout.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Paulus Ambunda was replaced at No. 10 by once-beaten Japanese 118-pounder Ryosuke Iwasa, who scored a majority decision over Richard Pumicpic (unrated) in Tokyo.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No change.

FLYWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: In just his sixth pro fight, Naoya Inoue (No. 9 last month) took down a formidable titleholder in Adrian Hernandez (No. 4 at the time) by sixth-round TKO. Inoue jumped to No. 5, pushing Johnriel Casimero into the spot vacated by Hernandez, who fell to No. 6. Naoya's younger brother, Takuma – who has only TWO pro fights – then took the No. 10 spot with a unanimous decision over Fahlan Sakkreerin Jr. (No. 10 last month).

STRAWWEIGHTS: Mexico's Francisco Rodriguez (unrated last month) flew in under the radar to upset Merlito Sabillo (No. 6 last month) and take his title by 10th-round TKO. Sabillo fell to No. 9, which bumped China's only rated fighter, Xiong Zhao Zhong, off the list. Rodriguez entered at No. 7, which pushed Jesus Silvestre from No. 7 to No. 6. Silvestre later fell to No. 10 after a mysterious split-decision loss in an 8-rounder against Eduardo Martinez, which lifted fighters No. 7 through No. 10 up a spot each.

Heavyweight Kubrat Pulev remained unbeaten with a third-round TKO of Ivica Perkovic on April 5.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine | 61-3-0 (51 KOs)

1. **KUBRAT PULEV**
Bulgaria | 20-0-0 (11 KOs)
2. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN**
Russia | 26-1-0 (18 KOs)
3. **BERMANE STIVERNE**
Canada | 23-1-1 (20 KOs)
4. **TYSON FURY**
U.K. | 22-0-0 (16 KOs)
5. **ROBERT HELENIUS**
Finland | 19-0-0 (11 KOs)
6. **CHRIS ARREOLA**
U.S. | 36-3-0 (31 KOs)
7. **VYACHESLAV GLAZKOV**
Ukraine | 17-0-1 (11 KOs)
8. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland | 49-3-0 (29 KOs)
9. **DEONTAY WILDER**
U.S. | 31-0-0 (31 KOs)
10. **BRYANT JENNINGS**
U.S. | 18-0-0 (10 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C **YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ**
Cuba | 28-1-0 (14 KOs)

1. **MARCO HUCK**
Germany | 37-2-1 (26 KOs)
2. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland | 49-2-1 (35 KOs)
3. **DENIS LEBEDEV**
Russia | 25-2-0 (19 KOs)
4. **OLA AFOLABI**
U.K. | 20-3-4 (9 KOs)
5. **GRIGORY DROZD**
Russia | 38-1-0 (27 KOs)
6. **ILUNGA MAKABU**
Congo | 16-1-0 (15 KOs)
7. **DMYTRO KUCHER**
Ukraine | 21-1-0 (15 KOs)
8. **FIRAT ARSLAN**
Germany | 33-7-2 (21 KOs)
9. **MATEUSZ MASTERNAK**
Poland | 32-1-0 (23 KOs)
10. **THABISO MCHUNU**
South Africa | 16-1-0 (11 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C **ADONIS STEVENSON**
Canada | 23-1-0 (20 KOs)

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
U.S. | 55-6-2 (32 KOs)
2. **SERGEY KOVALEV**
Russia | 24-0-1 (22 KOs)
3. **JEAN PASCAL**
Canada | 29-2-1 (17 KOs)
4. **JUERGEN BRAEHMER**
Germany | 43-2-0 (32 KOs)
5. **CHAD DAWSON**
U.S. | 31-3-0 (17 KOs)
6. **BEIBUT SHUMENOV**
Kazakhstan | 14-2-0 (9 KOs)
7. **TAVORIS CLOUD**
U.S. | 24-2-0 (19 KOs)
8. **NATHAN CLEVERLY**
U.K. | 26-1-0 (12 KOs)
9. **ISAAC CHILEMBA**
Malawi | 22-2-2 (9 KOs)
10. **ELEIDER ALVAREZ**
Colombia | 14-0-0 (8 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C **ANDRE WARD**
U.S. | 27-0-0 (14 KOs)

1. **CARL FROCH**
U.K. | 32-2-0 (23 KOs)
2. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark | 46-3-0 (35 KOs)
3. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Armenia | 39-4-0 (28 KOs)
4. **ROBERT STIEGLITZ**
Russia | 46-4-0 (26 KOs)
5. **GEORGE GROVES**
U.K. | 19-1-0 (15 KOs)
6. **THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN**
South Africa | 22-0-2 (13 KOs)
7. **SAKIO BIKA**
Cameroon | 32-5-3 (21 KOs)
8. **JAMES DEGALE**
U.K. | 18-1-0 (12 KOs)
9. **MARCO ANTONIO PERIBAN**
Mexico | 20-1-1 (13 KOs)
10. **MAXIM VLASOV**
Russia | 29-1-0 (14 KOs)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

C SERGIO MARTINEZ
Argentina | 51-2-2 (28 KOs)

1. **GENNADY GOLOVKIN**
Kazakhstan | 29-0-0 (26 KOs)
2. **FELIX STURM**
Germany | 39-3-2 (18 KOs)
3. **DANIEL GEALE**
Australia | 30-2-0 (16 KOs)
4. **PETER QUILLIN**
U.S. | 31-0-0 (22 KOs)
5. **MATTHEW MACKLIN**
U.K. | 30-5-0 (20 KOs)
6. **MARCO ANTONIO RUBIO**
Mexico | 59-6-1 (51 KOs)
7. **MARTIN MURRAY**
U.K. | 26-1-1 (11 KOs)
8. **HASSAN N'DAM N'JIKAM**
Cameroon | 30-1-0 (18 KOs)
9. **CURTIS STEVENS**
U.S. | 27-4-0 (20 KOs)
10. **BILLY JOE SAUNDERS**
U.K. | 19-0-0 (10 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

C FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
U.S. | 45-0-0 (26 KOs)

1. **CANELO ALVAREZ**
Mexico | 43-1-1 (31 KOs)
2. **ERISLANDY LARA**
Cuba | 19-1-2 (12 KOs)
3. **MIGUEL COTTO**
Puerto Rico | 38-4-0 (31 KOs)
4. **CARLOS MOLINA**
Mexico | 22-5-2 (6 KOs)
5. **AUSTIN TROUT**
U.S. | 26-2-0 (14 KOs)
6. **DEMETRIUS ANDRADE**
U.S. | 20-0-0 (13 KOs)
7. **VANES MARTIROSYAN**
U.S. | 34-1-1 (21 KOs)
8. **WILLIE NELSON**
U.S. | 21-1-1 (12 KOs)
9. **JERMELL CHARLO**
U.S. | 23-0-0 (11 KOs)
10. **ISHE SMITH**
U.S. | 25-6-0 (11 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

C FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
U.S. | 45-0-0 (26 KOs)

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines | 56-5-2 (38 KOs)
2. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
U.S. | 31-1-0 (12 KOs)
3. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico | 55-7-1 (40 KOs)
4. **SHAWN PORTER**
U.S. | 24-0-1 (15 KOs)
5. **KELL BROOK**
U.K. | 32-0-0 (22 KOs)
6. **ROBERT GUERRERO**
U.S. | 31-2-1 (18 KOs)
7. **KEITH THURMAN**
U.S. | 22-0-0 (20 KOs)
8. **MARCOS MAIDANA**
Argentina | 35-3-0 (31 KOs)
9. **ADRIEN BRONER**
U.S. | 27-1-0 (22 KOs)
10. **PAULIE MALIGNAGGI**
U.S. | 33-6-0 (7 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

C DANNY GARCIA
U.S. | 28-0-0 (16 KOs)

1. **LUCAS MATTHYSSE**
Argentina | 34-3-0 (32 KOs)
2. **RUSLAN PROVODNIKOV**
Russia | 23-2-0 (16 KOs)
3. **AMIR KHAN**
U.K. | 28-3-0 (19 KOs)
4. **LAMONT PETERSON**
U.S. | 32-2-1 (16 KOs)
5. **MIKE ALVARADO**
U.S. | 34-2-0 (23 KOs)
6. **ZAB JUDAH**
U.S. | 42-9-0 (29 KOs)
7. **DIERRY JEAN**
Canada | 25-1-0 (17 KOs)
8. **JESSIE VARGAS**
U.S. | 24-0-0 (9 KOs)
9. **KHABIB ALLAKHVERDIEV**
Russia | 19-1-0 (9 KOs)
10. **VIKTOR POSTOL**
Ukraine | 25-0-0 (10 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

C VACANT

1. **MIGUEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico | 34-3-0 (13 KOs)
2. **RICHAR ABRIL**
Cuba | 18-3-1 (8 KOs)
3. **TERENCE CRAWFORD**
U.S. | 23-0-0 (16 KOs)
4. **RAYMUNDO BELTRAN**
Mexico | 29-6-1 (17 KOs)
5. **RICKY BURNS**
U.K. | 36-3-1 (11 KOs)
6. **KEVIN MITCHELL**
U.K. | 37-2-0 (27 KOs)
7. **DANIEL ESTRADA**
Mexico | 32-2-1 (24 KOs)
8. **OMAR FIGUEROA**
U.S. | 22-0-1 (17 KOs)
9. **JUAN DIAZ**
U.S. | 39-4-0 (19 KOs)
10. **JORGE LINARES**
Venezuela | 36-3-0 (23 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

C VACANT

1. **TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**
Japan | 20-0-1 (17 KOs)
2. **MIKEY GARCIA**
U.S. | 34-0-0 (28 KOs)
3. **RANCES BARTHELEMY**
Cuba | 19-0-0 (12 KOs)
4. **TAKASHI MIURA**
Japan | 27-2-2 (20 KOs)
5. **JUAN CARLOS BURGOS**
Mexico | 30-2-2 (20 KOs)
6. **ROMAN MARTINEZ**
Puerto Rico | 27-2-2 (16 KOs)
7. **ARGENIS MENDEZ**
Dominican Rep. | 21-2-1 (11 KOs)
8. **DIEGO MAGDALENO**
U.S. | 25-1-0 (10 KOs)
9. **TAKAHIRO AO**
Japan | 25-3-1 (12 KOs)
10. **SERGIO THOMPSON**
Mexico | 29-3-0 (26 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

C VACANT

1. **JHONNY GONZALEZ**
Mexico | 55-8-0 (47 KOs)
2. **ABNER MARES**
Mexico | 26-1-1 (14 KOs)
3. **EVGENY GRADOVICH**
Russia | 18-0-0 (9 KOs)
4. **SIMPIWE VETYEKA**
South Africa | 26-2-0 (16 KOs)
5. **NICHOLAS WALTERS**
Jamaica | 23-0-0 (19 KOs)
6. **BILLY DIB**
Australia | 36-3-0 (21 KOs)
7. **JAVIER FORTUNA**
Dominican Rep. | 24-0-1 (18 KOs)
8. **NONITO DONAIRE**
Philippines | 32-2-0 (21 KOs)
9. **RONNY RIOS**
U.S. | 23-0-0 (10 KOs)
10. **LEE SELBY**
U.K. | 18-1-0 (7 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

C GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
Cuba | 13-0-0 (8 KOs)

1. **CARL FRAMPTON**
U.K. | 18-0-0 (13 KOs)
2. **LEO SANTA CRUZ**
U.S. | 27-0-1 (15 KOs)
3. **KIKO MARTINEZ**
Spain | 30-4-0 (22 KOs)
4. **SCOTT QUIGG**
U.K. | 28-0-2 (21 KOs)
5. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
Armenia | 39-6-1 (28 KOs)
6. **VICTOR TERRAZAS**
Mexico | 37-3-1 (21 KOs)
7. **CRISTIAN MIJARES**
Mexico | 49-8-2 (24 KOs)
8. **JEFFREY MATHEBULA**
South Africa | 27-5-2 (14 KOs)
9. **JHONATAN ROMERO**
Colombia | 23-1-0 (12 KOs)
10. **GENESIS SERVANIA**
Philippines | 24-0-0 (10 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. THE RING's Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another; 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders chose not to fight one another and either of them fights No. 3, No. 4 or No. 5, the winner may be awarded THE RING belt if the Editorial Board deems the contenders worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his championship weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-5 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

THE RING Ratings Chairman Chuck Giampa considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world but has final say on all changes. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

Records provided by boxrec.com

RING RATINGS

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **ANSELMO MORENO**
Panama | 35-2-1 (12 KOs)
2. **SHINSUKE YAMANAKA**
Japan | 20-0-2 (15 KOs)
3. **KOKI KAMEDA**
Japan | 32-1-0 (17 KOs)
4. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
Philippines | 33-3-3 (20 KOs)
5. **HUGO RUIZ**
Mexico | 34-2-0 (30 KOs)
6. **JOSEPH AGBEKO**
Ghana | 29-5-0 (22 KOs)
7. **JAMIE MCDONNELL**
U.K. | 23-2-1 (10 KOs)
8. **TOMOKI KAMEDA**
Japan | 29-0-0 (18 KOs)
9. **JULIO CEJA**
Mexico | 26-1-0 (24 KOs)
10. **RYOSUKE IWASA**
Japan | 17-1-0 (10 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
Argentina | 41-1-2 (22 KOs)
2. **CARLOS CUADRAS**
Mexico | 29-0-0 (24 KOs)
3. **SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI**
Thailand | 27-3-1 (25 KOs)
4. **TEPPARITH SINGWANCHA**
Thailand | 26-3-0 (16 KOs)
5. **ZOLANI TETE**
South Africa | 18-3-0 (16 KOs)
6. **JUAN CARLOS SANCHEZ JR.**
Mexico | 17-2-1 (9 KOs)
7. **ARTHUR VILLANUEVA**
Philippines | 25-0-0 (14 KOs)
8. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
Thailand | 53-1-1 (19 KOs)
9. **FELIPE ORUCUTA**
Mexico | 29-2-0 (24 KOs)
10. **DAIKI KAMEDA**
Japan | 29-4-0 (18 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C **AKIRA YAEGASHI**
Japan | 20-3-0 (10 KOs)

1. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
Nicaragua | 39-0-0 (33 KOs)
2. **JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA**
Mexico | 25-2-0 (18 KOs)
3. **BRIAN VILORIA**
U.S. | 33-4-0 (19 KOs)
4. **EDGAR SOSA**
Mexico | 49-8-0 (29 KOs)
5. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
Argentina | 33-1-0 (18 KOs)
6. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
South Africa | 30-2-0 (20 KOs)
7. **TOSHIYUKI IGARASHI**
Japan | 18-2-1 (11 KOs)
8. **GIOVANI SEGURA**
Mexico | 32-3-1 (28 KOs)
9. **HERNAN MARQUEZ**
Mexico | 36-4-0 (26 KOs)
10. **MILAN MELINDO**
Philippines | 30-1-0 (12 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **DONNIE NIETES**
Philippines | 32-1-4 (18 KOs)
2. **KAZUTO IOKA**
Japan | 14-0-0 (9 KOs)
3. **MOISES FUENTES**
Mexico | 19-1-1 (10 KOs)
4. **JOHNRIEL CASIMERO**
Philippines | 19-2-0 (11 KOs)
5. **NAOYA INOUE**
Japan | 6-0-0 (5 KOs)
6. **ADRIAN HERNANDEZ**
Mexico | 29-3-1 (18 KOs)
7. **PEDRO GUEVARA**
Mexico | 21-1-1 (14 KOs)
8. **FELIX ALVARADO**
Nicaragua | 18-1-0 (15 KOs)
9. **ALBERTO ROSSEL**
Peru | 32-8-0 (13 KOs)
10. **TAKUMA INOUE**
Japan | 2-0-0 (0 KOs)

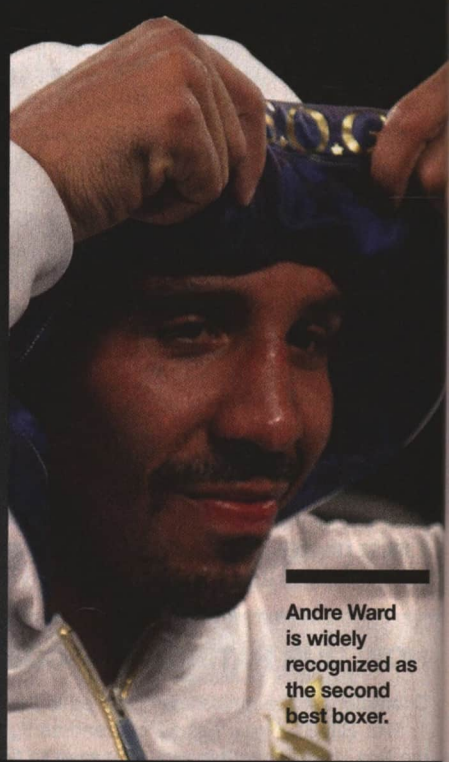
STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C **VACANT**

1. **HEKKIE BUDLER**
South Africa | 25-1-0 (8 KOs)
2. **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**
Thailand | 33-0-0 (10 KOs)
3. **DENVER CUELLO**
Philippines | 33-5-6 (21 KOs)
4. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
Japan | 26-6-0 (10 KOs)
5. **CARLOS BUITRAGO**
Nicaragua | 27-0-1 (16 KOs)
6. **FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ**
Mexico | 14-2-0 (10 KOs)
7. **OSVALDO NOVOA**
Mexico | 13-4-1 (8 KOs)
8. **MERLITO SABILLO**
Philippines | 23-1-1 (12 KOs)
9. **RYUJI HARA**
Japan | 17-0-0 (10 KOs)
10. **JESUS SILVESTRE**
Mexico | 28-5-0 (20 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
U.S. | 45-0-0 (26 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT/ JR. MIDDLEWEIGHT
2. **ANDRE WARD**
U.S. | 27-0-0 (14 KOs) | SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
3. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine | 61-3-0 (51 KOs) | HEAVYWEIGHT
4. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines | 56-5-2 (38 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
5. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
U.S. | 31-1-0 (12 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
6. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico | 55-7-1 (40 KOs) | WELTERWEIGHT
7. **SERGIO MARTINEZ**
Argentina | 51-2-2 (28 KOs) | MIDDLEWEIGHT
8. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
Cuba | 13-0-0 (8 KOs) | JR. FEATHERWEIGHT
9. **CANELO ALVAREZ**
Mexico | 43-1-1 (31 KOs) | JR. MIDDLEWEIGHT
10. **CARL FROCH**
U.K. | 32-2-0 (23 KOs) | SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT



Andre Ward is widely recognized as the second best boxer.

THE RING POLICY ON RATED BOXERS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS

THE RING will remove from its ratings any rated boxer — including a champion — if such boxer at some point undergoes drug testing (Olympic-style or otherwise) and that boxer tests positive for a performance-enhancing drug.

In the event that a boxer has undergone testing in which the boxer provides two samples ("A" and "B") and the boxer's "A" and subsequent "B" samples test positive for a performance-enhancing drug or if his "A" sample tests positive and he waives his right to have the "B" sample tested then the boxer shall immediately be removed from the ratings.

A boxer whose "A" sample tested positive and is awaiting the results of his "B" sample will not be allowed to fight for a championship or rise in the ratings.

A boxer who is removed because of a positive test will have the opportunity to earn his way back into the ratings after any suspension period is completed.

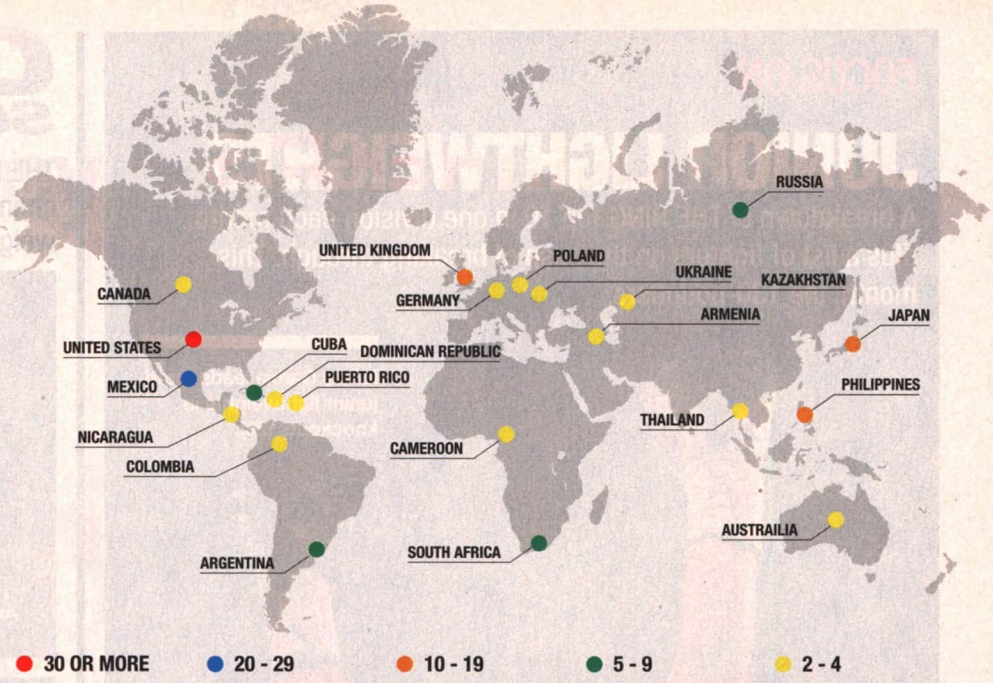
A boxer who is dropped also may be reinstated if the testing agency subsequently reverses its decision or a court of competent jurisdiction finds that the test result was invalid.

RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

UNITED STATES	36 *	▲ 2
MEXICO	29	▲ 1
UNITED KINGDOM	17	
JAPAN	15	▲ 2
PHILIPPINES	10	
RUSSIA	9	
SOUTH AFRICA	7	
ARGENTINA	5	
CUBA	5	▼ 1
CANADA	4	
GERMANY	4	
THAILAND	4	▼ 1
UKRAINE	4	
NICARAGUA	3	
POLAND	3	
ARMENIA	2	
AUSTRALIA	2	
CAMEROON	2	
COLOMBIA	2	
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	2	
KAZAKHSTAN	2	
PUERTO RICO	2	
BULGARIA	1	
CONGO	1	
DENMARK	1	
FINLAND	1	
GHANA	1	
JAMAICA	1	
MALAWI	1	
PANAMA	1	
PERU	1	
SPAIN	1	
TURKEY	1	
VENEZUELA	1	

Out (from last month): China, Nimibia and Turkey

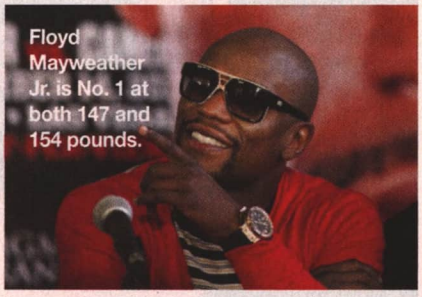
** Includes two ratings for Floyd Mayweather Jr. (junior middleweight and welterweight).*



U.K. VS. JAPAN

The U.S. and Mexico continue to dominate the ratings but an interesting race for No. 3 involving the U.K. and Japan is on. Two Japanese brothers – junior flyweights Naoya and Takuma Inoue – were added to the ratings since last month while the U.K. neither gained nor lost any fighters. That leaves Japan only two behind the U.K. Here's a look.

DIVISION	U.K.	JAPAN
HEAVYWEIGHTS	1	0
CRUISERWEIGHTS	1	0
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS	1	0
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	3	0
MIDDLEWEIGHTS	3	0
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS	0	0
WELTERWEIGHTS	1	0
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS	1	0
LIGHTWEIGHTS	2	0
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS	0	3
FEATHERWEIGHTS	1	0
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS	2	0
BANTAMWEIGHTS	1	4
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS	0	1
FLYWEIGHTS	0	2
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS	0	3
STRAWWEIGHTS	0	2
TOTAL	17	15


Floyd Mayweather Jr. is No. 1 at both 147 and 154 pounds.

DIVISION DOMINANCE

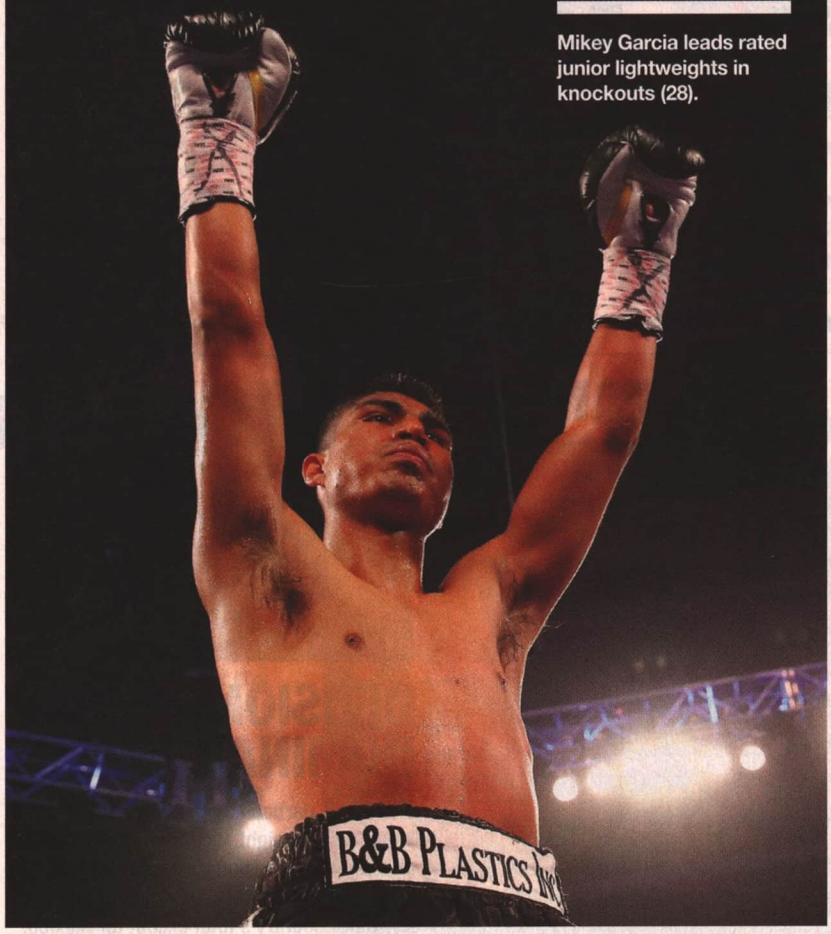
The U.S. is particularly dominant in the junior welterweight, welterweight and junior middleweight divisions, in which the Yanks have 19 rated fighters. That's more than any other country's total except for Mexico. Here is who has the most rated fighters in each division.

HEAVYWEIGHT U.S. 3
CRUISERWEIGHT RUSSIA, POLAND, GERMANY 2
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT U.S. 3
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT U.K. 3
MIDDLEWEIGHT U.K. 3
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT U.S. 7
WELTERWEIGHT U.S. 7
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT U.S. 5
LIGHTWEIGHT U.S., MEXICO 3
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT JAPAN 3
FEATHERWEIGHT MEXICO 2
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT U.K., MEXICO 2
BANTAMWEIGHT JAPAN 4
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT MEXICO, THAILAND 3
FLYWEIGHT MEXICO 4
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT MEXICO, JAPAN 3
STRAWWEIGHT MEXICO 3

FOCUS ON . . .

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

A breakdown of THE RING Top 10 in one division each month, plus a list of fighters on the cusp of breaking through. This month: the 130-pounders.



Mikey Garcia leads rated junior lightweights in knockouts (28).

MOST WEEKS RATED: ROMAN MARTINEZ **291**

FEWEST WEEKS RATED: SERGIO THOMPSON **7**

OLDEST: TAKASHI UCHIYAMA **34**

YOUNGEST: JUAN CARLOS BURGOS **26**

MOST FIGHTS: BURGOS AND MIKEY GARCIA **34**

FEWEST FIGHTS: RANCES BARTHELEMY **19**

HIGHEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: GARCIA AND BARTHELEMY **100 PERCENT**

LOWEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: TAKAHIRO AO **86.2 PERCENT**

MOST KOS: GARCIA **28**

FEWEST KOS: DIEGO MAGDALENO **10**

LONGEST CURRENT WINNING STREAK: GARCIA **34 FIGHTS**

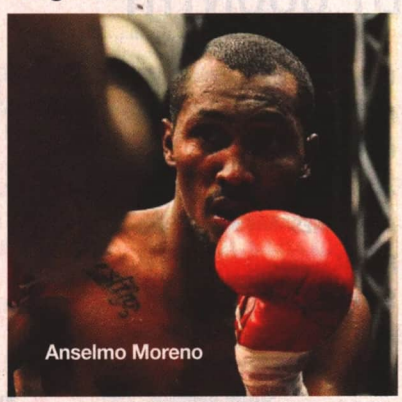
ON THE POUND-FOR-POUND LIST: NONE

TITLEHOLDERS IN THE TOP 10: UCHIYAMA (WBA), GARCIA (WBO), ARGENIS MENDEZ (IBF), TAKASHI MIURA (WBC)

ON THE CUSP (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER): DAIKI KANEKO, JOSE PEDRAZA, ORLANDO SALIDO, FRANCISCO VARGAS, BRYAN VASQUEZ

OLD SCHOOL 8

THE RING staff members' current champions in the original eight weight classes.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MIDDLEWEIGHT: SERGIO MARTINEZ
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: MIKEY GARCIA
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
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BANTAMWEIGHT: ANSELMO MORENO
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

Note: *This is how the weights break down: Heavyweight includes cruiserweight, light heavyweight includes super middleweight, all divisions middleweight through flyweight include the "junior" versions, and flyweight also includes strawweight.*

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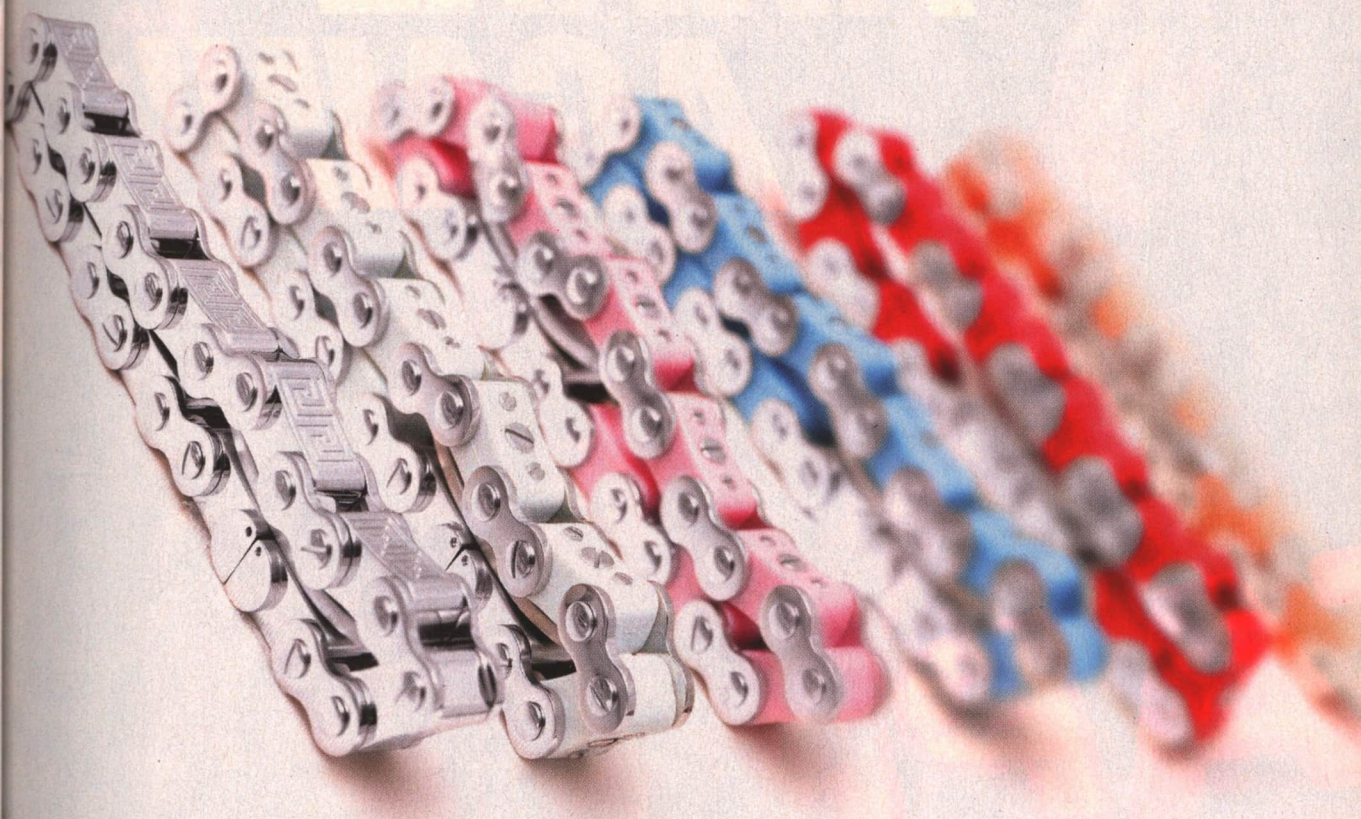

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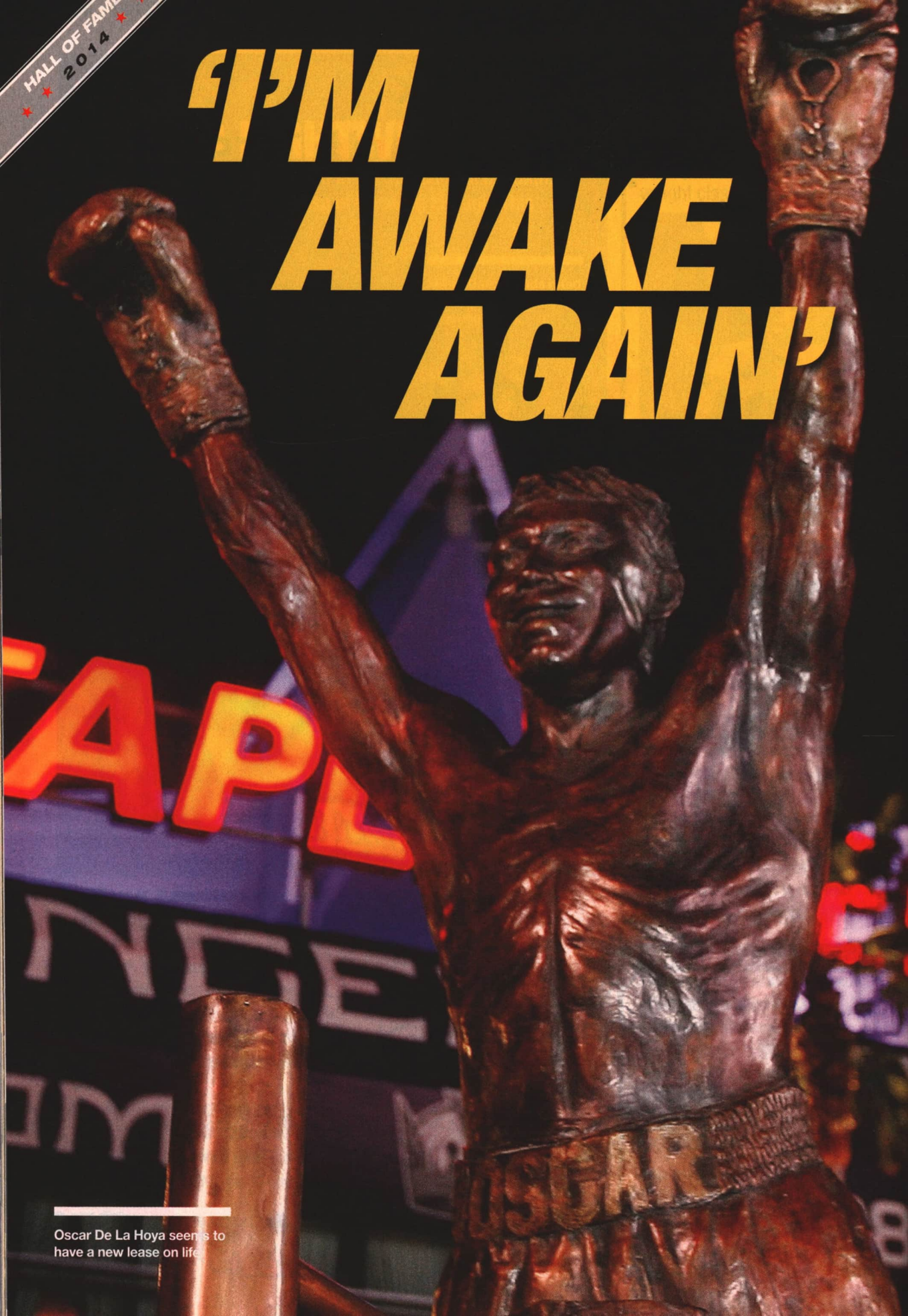
HALL OF FAME 2014

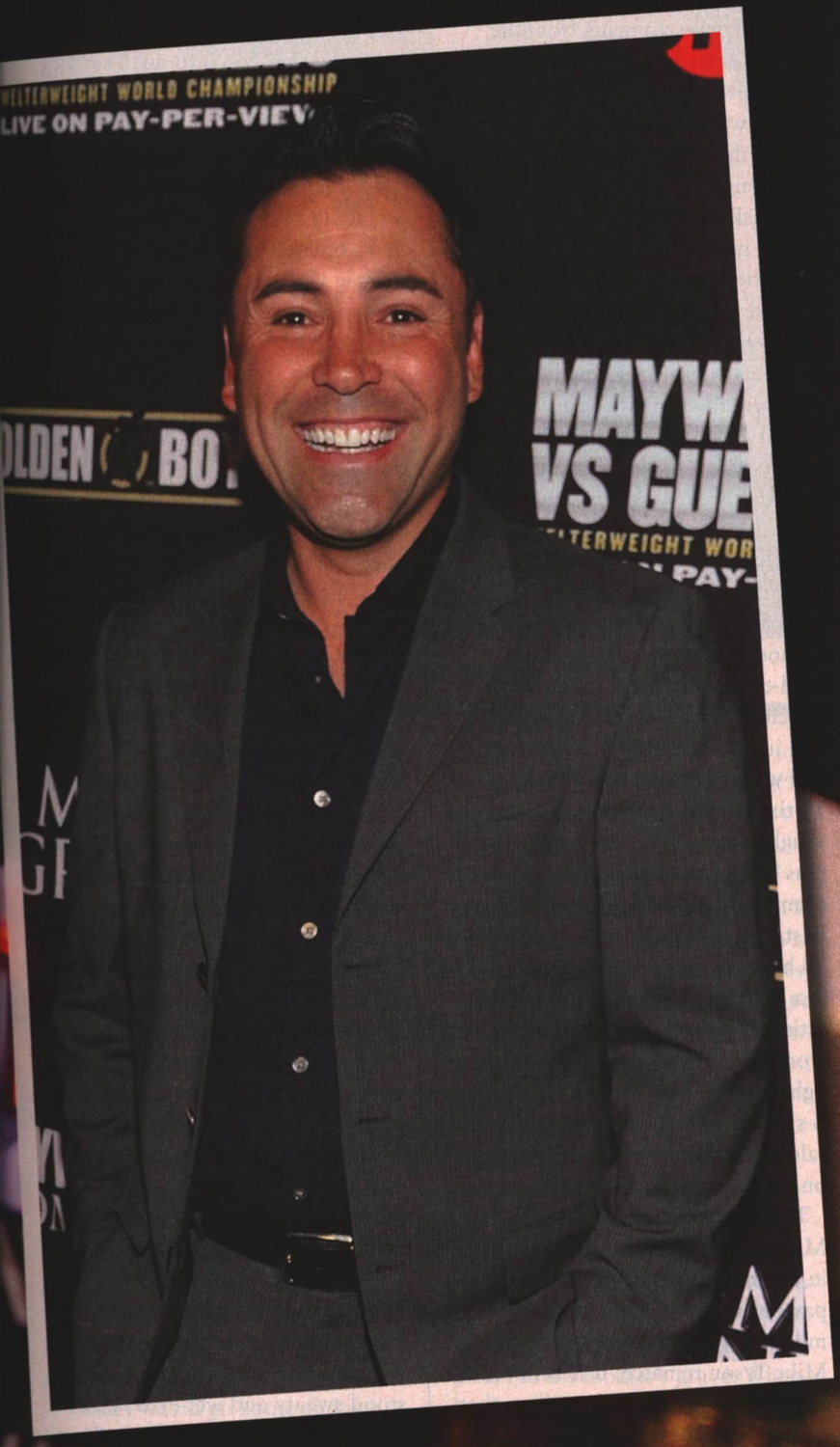
'I'M AWAKE AGAIN'



Oscar De La Hoya seems to have a new lease on life

OSCAR DE LA HOYA, AT PEACE WITH HIS BOXING CAREER AND HIMSELF, SAYS 'I'M GOING TO BE INVOLVED LIKE NEVER BEFORE' IN GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

By **Ron Borges**



After all the championship belts won and all the millions upon millions earned, after all the accolades and all the sometimes unruly acclaim, even after all the successes in boxing and business, the first victory remains the golden one and the last – the victory over himself – remains the most important for Oscar De La Hoya.

The year 2013 was a mixed blessing for a tarnished Golden Boy. It is the year he was elected to the International Boxing Hall of Fame on the first ballot and the year another relapse into the fog of alcoholism sent him back into rehab only days before his fighter, Canelo Alvarez, was to face Floyd Mayweather Jr. in a bout that would break the record De La Hoya and Mayweather set for gross pay-per-view income six years earlier.

Yet 2013 was more than a familiar pattern of ups and downs, of boxing triumphs and real-life defeats. It was the year De La Hoya did what he'd been trained since he was 5 years old never to do.

It was the year he surrendered.

For an alcoholic or anyone ravaged by the demon of addiction, that is the only chance you have. Only in admitting defeat is there a shot at victory. But what fighter can admit such a thing? What champion ever had his hand raised who hadn't denied the soothing voice of defeat whispering to give up? Who can be a successful fighter if he is willing to admit the fight is lost?

That was the conundrum Oscar De La Hoya sparred with for years before he finally accepted that in one part of his life defeat was actually victory.

"This is the fight of my life," said De La Hoya, who spoke at length in two interviews with THE RING. "I've finally surrendered to it. I kept going in and out and in and out [of rehab], hurting my family, hurting

myself, doing these things that are not me. How can I stop? I finally realized I don't have no bottom. Addicts talk about their bottom all the time. My bottom was death. But surrender? That was impossible.

"My whole life was training myself NOT to surrender. I didn't understand this is a different fight. This is a fight where I have to lace up the gloves every day knowing you never win this fight. It never ends. It's not like getting in with [Julio Cesar] Chavez or [Shane] Mosley or [Felix] Trinidad. No one raises your hand. You have to admit in this fight you don't have the power to win. All my life I thought I had that power. I don't know how it happened, but it finally became clear to me my ego is not my amigo."

De La Hoya chuckled at those final words. He had, he says, through a power greater than himself, finally learned the truth. "My ego is not my amigo!" It sounds simple but when all the successes in your life have been fueled by a lethal combination of fear, fire and first-person thinking, it is not.

"I was tired," De La Hoya said of his recent acceptance of the sobering realities of addiction. "I didn't want to be this athlete-celebrity who people shake their heads at and say 'How can he let this happen?' I finally had to see who I was. I wasn't the boxer. I wasn't the celebrity or the owner of a powerful promotional company. I was an alcoholic. I'd done all those other things. I accomplished a lot in boxing but I also have a disease.

"If you're blessed, you just say one day, 'OK.' You don't deny it no more. I had to let my guard down and admit I cannot do this on my own. How do you do that? You give in. I'd been knocked down before. Now I'd been knocked down harder. Now what?"

Less than five days before Mayweather-Alvarez the answer became clear when he issued a press release saying he had voluntarily checked himself into a treatment center again. It was not the first time but the hope is it will be the last. He attends almost daily AA meetings, some as early as 5 a.m., to try and make that a reality, to try and win the fight you can never win but cannot afford to lose.

"All these resentments from the past I'd carried for so long," he said. "I was a volcano way overdue to erupt. I was a volcano that *needed* to erupt. I didn't know how to express my feelings to my father (Joel, a stern taskmaster who first pushed his son into boxing). I couldn't share my emotions with my family. So I escaped. I was very good at it."

For years, he said, boxing was his release. Inside the ring he was free from the fears that enveloped much of the rest of his life. Free from emotional pain he could not shoulder or face. Free from the normal rules of society, too. Free, frankly, to punch someone in the face and make them feel the pain he was carrying.

Those emotions, plus his own hard-earned skills and tremendous punching power in his early years as a junior lightweight, lightweight and welterweight, made him an 11-time world champion in six weight divisions. Those skills, plus Hollywood good looks and a dramatic back story of the kid from East L.A., who carried his sport on his back for a decade, made him wealthy – at one point, in the estimate of *Forbes* magazine, he was worth $175 million. He was also a fighter who, with Mayweather as the B-side, set the all-time pay-per-view sales record of over 2.5 million buys on May 5, 2007.

That night would end with Mayweather winning a split decision in a fight that shattered the previous pay-per-view buy rate of 1.99 million set by the Evander Holyfield-Mike Tyson rematch. It is believed De la Hoya grossed $52 million that night, the highest purse in boxing history at that time.

None of that stopped him from drinking. None of it stopped him from being an occasional cocaine abuser. None of it stopped his problems. Yet boxing did allow him one escape.

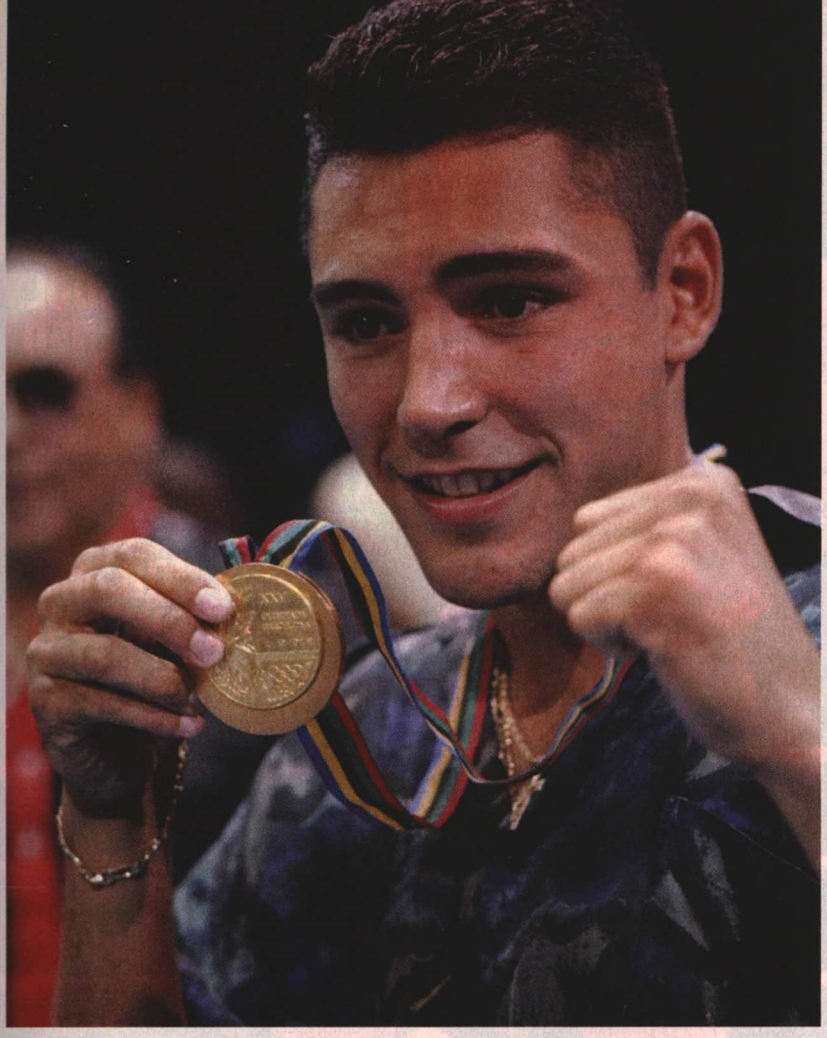
"I was pretty fortunate to be free to beat somebody up in the ring," said De La Hoya. "It was a way of letting out my frustrations. That's why I lasted so long. If I didn't have boxing, who knows where I'd be? I know I wouldn't be here."

"Here" encompasses many places, including next June in Canastota, N.Y., the home of the International Boxing Hall of Fame. He fought his way there just as he's fighting his way to a sober life. Yet of all those world titles the one that counts the most is the first one. The golden one. The pure one.

"Oh, the gold medal!" De La Hoya says immediately when asked if he could only retain one victory, which would it be. "That one was for glory, for honor, for my mother. That's the one that started it all. That silhouette in the Golden Boy Promotions logo is me, and the gold edge around it is that gold medal."

The Golden Boy's story was always tinged with sadness as well as success. A boxer since the age of 5, De La Hoya was born into a fighting family. His grandfather, father and brother all boxed but none as well as he did. He was 234-6 as an amateur and by the age of 17 winner of the 1990 U.S. Nationals and the Goodwill Games. But the luster of those successes that year was dulled by learning his mother, Cecilia, was terminally ill with breast cancer. Always his strongest supporter, she died that October but not before telling her 17-year-old son that her dream was that he would win Olympic gold.

Less than two years later, their story now the backdrop for his growing popularity, De La Hoya stood sweaty and wet-eyed in the middle of a ring in Barcelona, Spain, his hand raised after defeating



It all started when De La Hoya won a gold medal in the 1992 Olympics.

German Marco Rudolph for the gold. Later that day he gathered with family and friends to eat lunch not far from the arena. It was hosted by Hall of Fame boxing trainer Lou Duva, who believed he had signed De La Hoya. He was wrong, but that day the Golden Boy was born.

"When we got home, there were thousands of people waiting for us at the airport," De La Hoya recalled. "I couldn't believe it. I was a kid. What did I know? It really was about the glory. I think that was maybe the last pure Olympic team we had. We weren't fighting for contracts. We were fighting for pride. That's all gone now. Now all these kids think about at the Olympics is signing pro contracts.

"I said I would go home and go to college but the truth was I was afraid. I was always afraid. I didn't fight in the street. I was afraid of getting beat up. When I thought about college, I was afraid to go. The only thing I wasn't afraid of was boxing. I was never afraid in the ring. It was the only place I wasn't. When I would lace up those gloves, I felt I was in control of my life. If you hit me in the face, it was on. I was going to hit you back.

"I have a picture of myself on my wall boxing when I was 5½. I have the same look of determination on my face I had later. I was going to win."

Soon he knew he was also going pro, an idea that began to dawn on him after returning from the 1992 Olympics and taking that gold medal to his mother's grave. When he returned, there were always messages waiting.

"I started getting phone calls from

GETTY IMAGES

HIGHS AND LOWS

Oscar De La Hoya had many ups and downs in his professional career. He won 11 world titles (including a RING belt) in six divisions and went 24-5 in 29 championship fights but also lost some of his biggest matchups. Here are his greatest successes and disappointments.

SUCCESSES

1. Fernando Vargas (KO 11, 2002): De La Hoya's most satisfying victory.

2. Ike Quartey (SD 12, 1999): Proved his mettle in an unforgettable final round.

3. Julio Cesar Chavez I (TKO 4, 1996): Torch was passed from one generation to the next.

4. Rafael Ruelas (KO 2, 1995): Became a star on the biggest stage.

5. Pernell Whitaker (UD 12, 1997): Found a way to beat a legend.

DISAPPOINTMENTS

1. Felix Trinidad (MD 12, 1999): Most believe he was cheated in his biggest fight.

2. Manny Pacquiao (TKO 8, 2008): The image of him being pummeled was disturbing.

3. Bernard Hopkins (KO 9, 2004): The then-Executioner was too big and too good.

4. Floyd Mayweather Jr. (SD 12, 2007): Might've won had he kept jabbing.

5. Shane Mosley II (UD 12, 2003): Some believe De La Hoya did enough to win.

people, and I didn't know how they got my number," De La Hoya said. "They were all talking about money."

De La Hoya made his pro debut three months later, on Nov. 23, 1992, at the Forum in Inglewood, Calif., then the home of the Lakers. Sixteen years later they would erect a seven-foot statue of him outside the new home of the Lakers, the Staples Center. It would stare back at one of Magic Johnson. In a sense, both were magic and tragic, their private lives at war with their public personas.

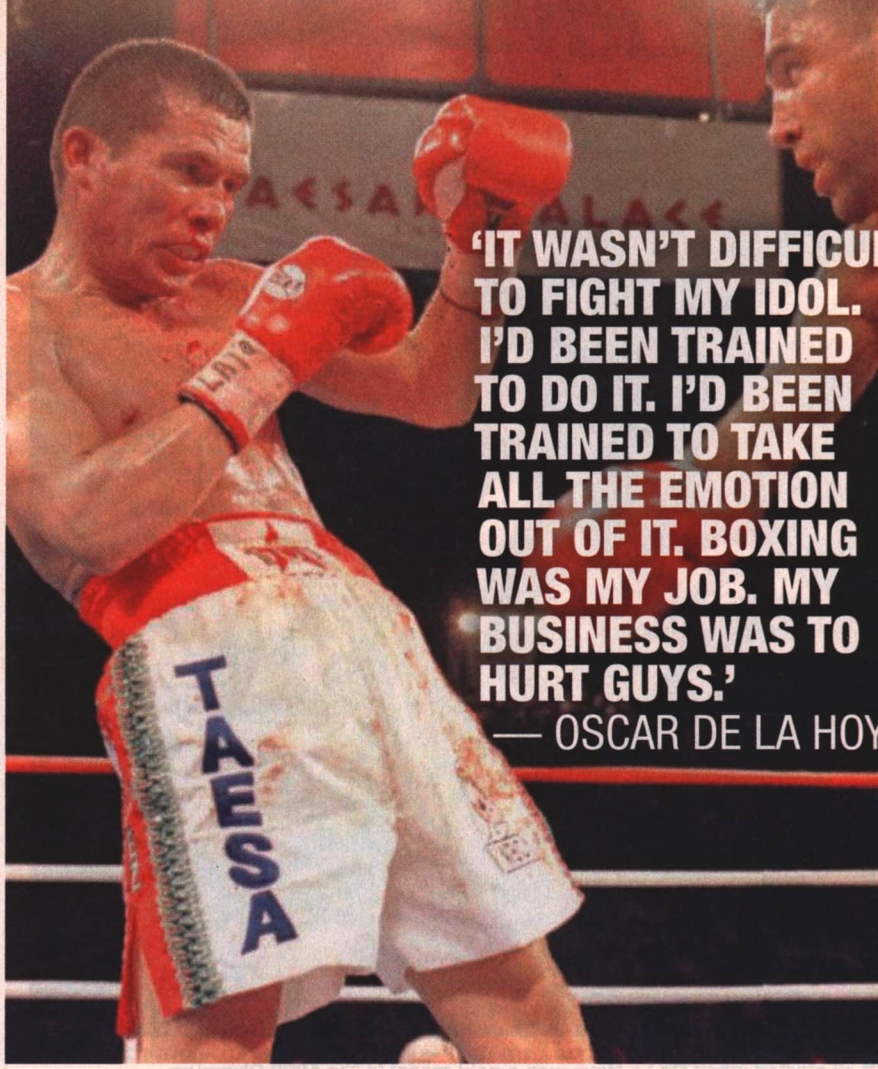
De La Hoya's success was immediate and spectacular. By his 12th fight, he was a world champion, stopping WBO junior lightweight titleholder Jimmi Bredhal in the 10th round. He had been a pro less than a year and a half.

Two more fights and he was lightweight champion. And by May 1995 he had unified the title by crushing Rafael Ruelas in two rounds. Thirteen months later he would stand across the ring from his boyhood idol, challenging Julio Cesar Chavez for the junior welterweight title at Caesars Palace. He was 23 and a rock star.

The two fighters made a 13-city, seven-day pilgrimage across America on two Caesars' jets to hype what was at the time the biggest non-heavyweight title fight in history. Chavez was 96-1-1 with more than three times as many stoppages (74) as De La Hoya had fights (22). He wore his crown with a champion's arrogance.

De La Hoya would defeat him in four bloody rounds, learning in the months leading up to the fight that meeting your idol is not always what you hoped. He also learned that defeating Chavez would cause a segment of the Latino boxing audience to turn on him.

"It wasn't what I expected it would be, but I have always respected Chavez as a fighter," De La Hoya said. "I still do. I idolized him. When I beat him the first time, he got cut in the first round and said he'd been cut in training. I guess so. The second time I beat him (two years later) he was bleeding again. He didn't say nothing.



'IT WASN'T DIFFICU TO FIGHT MY IDOL. I'D BEEN TRAINED TO DO IT. I'D BEEN TRAINED TO TAKE ALL THE EMOTION OUT OF IT. BOXING WAS MY JOB. MY BUSINESS WAS TO HURT GUYS.'
— OSCAR DE LA HOY

"It wasn't difficult to fight my idol. I'd been trained to do it. I'd been trained to take all the emotion out of it. Boxing was my job. My business was to hurt guys. You didn't think about any other emotion."

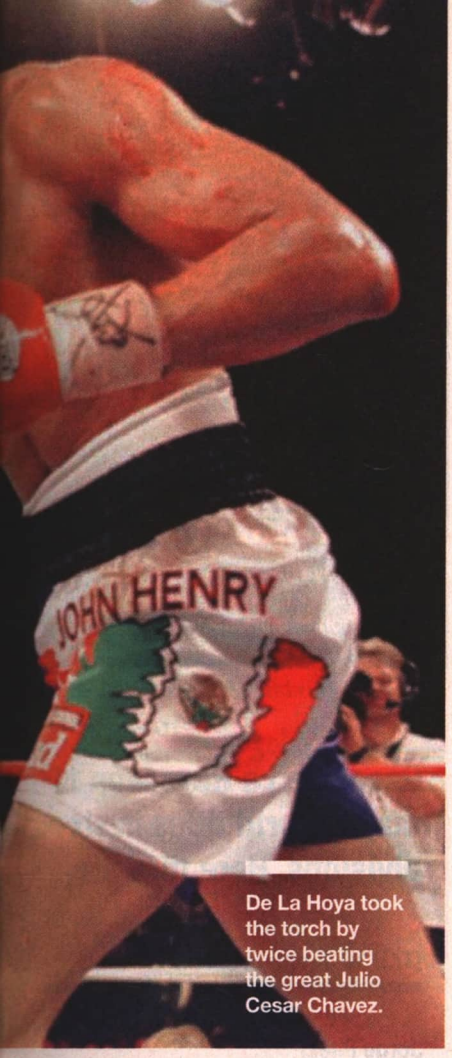
Despite his growing success after winning the lineal welterweight title with a hotly disputed but unanimous decision over Pernell Whitaker two fights later, De La Hoya had become a lightning rod as well as boxing's biggest draw. He opened up an entirely new fan base that included women in droves, but also garnered the enmity of a portion of hardcore Latino fans.

His pay-per-view numbers were astounding, he was undefeated and had twice faced down Chavez, the epitome of Latino machismo, and beaten the unhittable Whitaker (40-1-1 at the time), yet to some he had become a symbol of nothing they understood or appreciated.

"I was a pretty boy to them," De La Hoya said. "I didn't look like a fighter. I didn't have my nose flat. I didn't bleed enough in the ring. I'd beaten Chavez, but I couldn't please them."

One such person was De La Hoya's father, with whom he had a prickly relationship for years. The father, it seemed, was never able to be just a father. Boxing is a hard place devoid of emotion. It is the hurt business, and for years it hurt the son to never hear his father's praise.

That didn't come until after the oddest of nights: Sept. 18, 1999. De La Hoya was in Las Vegas to face his greatest challenge, undefeated IBF welterweight champion Felix Trinidad, in a unification showdown between undefeated stars. It set a pay-per-view record for non-



De La Hoya took the torch by twice beating the great Julio Cesar Chavez.

heavyweights and was dominated by De La Hoya for the first nine rounds.

Then, inexplicably, he stopped fighting, taking literally his corner's instruction to "box, move." The more he did, the harder Trinidad attacked and the more De La Hoya looked like he was running, giving away the final three rounds.

He outlanded Trinidad, 236-116, giving him the kind of boxing lesson Bernard Hopkins would use to develop the plan that allowed him to destroy Trinidad, yet somehow Trinidad was awarded a majority decision, leaving De La Hoya enraged and stupefied.

"When I got back to the locker room I went berserk," he said. "I punched a locker. I started crying. I couldn't believe they could do that to me. I was devastated. Then my father told me I'd fought a beautiful fight. I finally lose, and that's when he tells me I'm a great fighter? That felt really good, but I resented that decision for a long time.

"I don't have any anger about it anymore. Only recently was I able to feel that way. I let that resentment go. It's in the past. You can't change it."

De La Hoya badly wanted a rematch, but it never happened, and in less than a year he was awarded the WBC title after Trinidad relinquished it rather than face him. De La Hoya then chose to take on lightweight champion Shane Mosley, an old nemesis from their amateur days.

Mosley had inflicted two of De La Hoya's six amateur losses, and moving up two weight classes posed a considerable problem De La Hoya understood then and accepts today.

"Shane Mosley was a very difficult opponent," De La Hoya said. "He was a great fighter. For a few years he may have been the best in the world. He was fast. He was strong. He could punch. I knew Mosley was a difficult opponent, but those were the fights I wanted. I wanted to fight the best, and he was the best."

He was soon also the winner of a split decision, appearing to carry the night in the final two rounds, and De La Hoya doesn't dispute the outcome. What was more debatable was the rematch three years later, two fights after De La Hoya faced an old rival, Fernando Vargas, to unify the junior middleweight title.

"I still can't believe Vargas hated me so much," De La Hoya said. "How could he hate me when to the best of my knowledge I never did anything to him? I have to believe he was just trying to motivate himself."

Vargas once claimed De La Hoya laughed at him after he fell into a snow drift when both were training in the mountains east of Los Angeles. Whatever the truth of that, by the time De La Hoya returned from a 15-month layoff, there was nothing between the two of them but bile. At one point, De La Hoya said he would never fight Vargas because he'd been so blatantly disrespectful, but they finally faced off on Sept. 14, 2002. The promoters dubbed the event "Bad Blood." No one could quarrel with that.

The bout was surprisingly even after six rounds, but De La Hoya took over in the second half of the fight, badly wobbling Vargas with a left hook in the 10th and dropping him in the 11th before the bout was stopped after a salvo of unanswered punches. Two fights later, De La Hoya was back in with Mosley, and this time lost a unanimous decision. Even though CompuBox stats had De La Hoya outlanding him 221-127, Mosley was a 115-113 winner on all three cards, an announcement that seemed to stun even Mosley.

That was the beginning of an odd pattern. De la Hoya would win one and lose the next, going 3-4 in his final seven fights. That included losing an ill-advised challenge for the middleweight title to Hopkins after being handed what he now says "was probably a gift" in outpointing Felix Sturm to win the WBO 160-pound title to become the first boxer to win championships in six separate weight classes.

"I was confident in training camp,'" De La Hoya said. "I thought I was faster and I could beat Hopkins. But when I got in the ring with him and I had to look up at him, I thought 'Uh, oh!' He was so much bigger than me. I thought I was holding my own until he hit me with that body shot in the ninth round. I was all right after 11 seconds, but for 10 seconds I couldn't breathe. Those 10 seconds are all that count in boxing."

He would not fight for 20 months before coming back to dismantle Ricardo Mayorga and set up the Mayweather fight. Many wondered why he abandoned his jab halfway through the latter at a time when he was controlling the tempo with it. Only De La Hoya knew why.

"I got old in the middle of that fight," De La Hoya said.

With time running out and his problems outside the ring growing, De La Hoya didn't fight for a year

before winning a tune-up and then announcing he would face boxing's hottest commodity, Manny Pacquiao, on Dec. 6, 2008. Pacquiao was boxing's pound-for-pound champion but was moving up from 135 to 147, a jump De La Hoya felt would be too much for him.

What he didn't realize was moving down from 154 for the first time in seven years would be even more daunting for him.

"I thought there was no way he could beat me," De La Hoya recalled. "He was too small. But I hadn't been 147 in seven years. I went on this weird diet. I was eating only kangaroo meat and venison. Someone said it matched my blood type. I lost so much weight, I was down to 142 a month before the fight. Lightweights were beating me up in the gym. You look back and wonder what you were thinking."

Whatever he was thinking he knew once the fight began that Pacquiao's trainer, Freddie Roach, had been right when he said he was shot. Unable to pull the trigger and his legs all but gone, De La Hoya took a harsh beating for eight rounds before retiring on his stool, his head bowed.

He was 35 and well aware he was finished as a boxer. But he had already insured his future. Six years earlier De La Hoya founded Golden Boy Promotions, which has become a driving force in the sport. Originally his own fights were the backbone of the enterprise, but as his career wound down, he and CEO Richard Schaefer began to sign a vast array of talent, including partnerships with Hopkins and Mosley.

By then he also had two children (adding a third in January) with his wife Millie Corretjer, a former Puerto Rican pop star; a Grammy-nominated CD; and growing real estate holdings that included the office building that housed GBP in downtown L.A. But as he continued to battle his demons, De La Hoya gradually became less and less involved in his company.

Over time Schaefer became more the face of Golden Boy than the Golden Boy. In recent years Schaefer and rival promoter Bob Arum, who promoted De La Hoya in his early career, became involved in a very public rivalry that has led them to do no business together since 2009 despite the prominence of their companies.

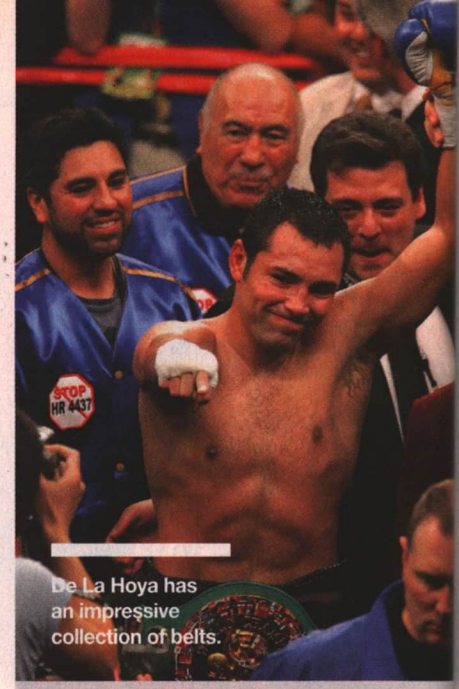
De La Hoya is ready to change that, he says, and is ready to reassert himself to put his company back in line with the values for which it was established 12 years ago. That could take some doing given that Schaefer told the *Los Angeles Times* one day after De La Hoya publicly said he'd like to work with Arum on a Saul Alvarez-Manny Pacquiao match that, "I have no interest in dealing with Bob Arum.

"Last I checked I was CEO, unless Oscar wants to change that," Schaefer said. "... If he wants to change that, since he's the majority shareholder and decides he wants to fire me, I can't stop that. I'm the CEO. What's higher the CEO or the president? He's the president. It says in my contract I'm the CEO. I run the business."

That bold statement came 24 hours after De La Hoya told the *Times* the problems between Schaefer and him had been worked out and that Schaefer had agreed to a contract extension through 2018. Schaefer immediately disputed that, telling boxingscene.com the same day that, "I am not aware of signing a contract extension recently, so I have no idea what Oscar is talking about. I know that Oscar, as part of his recovery, is making friends with Arum, and I support him if that is what he wants to do, but I have no interest in working with Arum."

Those diametrically opposed comments from the president and CEO of the company seemed to at least reflect a fissure that may be more difficult to repair than De La Hoya hoped.

"Boxing gave me everything," De



De La Hoya has an impressive collection of belts.

THE TITLES

Oscar De La Hoya won 11 major world titles in six divisions. Here they are.

1994 – WBO junior lightweight (TKO 10 Jimmi Bredahl)

1994 – WBO lightweight (KO 2 Jorge Paez)

1995 – IBF lightweight (KO 2 Rafael Ruelas)

1996 – WBC junior welterweight (TKO 4 Julio Cesar Chavez)

1997 – WBC welterweight (UD 12 Pernell Whitaker)

2000 – WBC welterweight (awarded vacant title)

2001 – WBC junior middleweight (UD 12 Javier Castillejo)

2002 – THE RING junior middleweight (TKO 11 Fernando Vargas)

2002 – WBA Junior middleweight (TKO 11 Fernando Vargas)

2004 – WBO middleweight (UD 12 Felix Sturm)

2006 – WBC junior middleweight (TKO 6 Ricardo Mayorga)

La Hoya said of both the sport and the company that bears his image and name and once also bore his belief that doing what was best for boxing and its fans was good business. "When I started Golden Boy, it was a bold move, but I approached it the way I approached boxing – being aggressive and believing in myself. I believed Golden Boy would be successful, and it has been. It gave me something to be involved with, but not making a comeback [to the ring] was very difficult. I didn't have to come back for money or because I had something to prove. I just loved the challenge. I loved the fighting spirit. It's in my DNA.

"Many mornings I'd wake up thinking, 'Maybe I can do this today.' The problem was then I'd run five miles and couldn't get out of bed for two days. My joints were aching. My ankles were flaring up. They were indications my time had passed, but I kept finding excuses to make that comeback. I was searching for it.

"Sitting ringside at our fights, I'd think, 'I can beat that guy.' I could beat anybody sitting at ringside, but I finally came to realize it was OK to accept I'd had my time. I'm working on that every day, to feel at peace with myself."

One thing he does seem at peace with is reasserting himself as the driving force behind Golden Boy Promotions even as Schaefer appears to be in conflict with De La Hoya's vision. Formed at the height of his own boxing powers, Golden Boy has grown to become arguably the No. 1 promotional company in the sport. It has exclusive deals with Barclays Center in Brooklyn and Fox Sports 1 for its *Monday Night* series, in addition to a multitude of dates with Showtime. That last relationship solidified after HBO banished Golden Boy in the aftermath of Mayweather's defection from the network, the last straw in a number of Golden Boy-affiliated fighters to do so.

There is no disputing Golden Boy's power in the marketplace, but what has been highly debated of late is how much De La Hoya had to do with it and whether the split that developed between Schaefer and him will grow wide enough for Schaefer to leave. Some have speculated that Schaefer might join forces with the most powerful man in boxing, Al Haymon.

"There's no question Richard has said a lot of disloyal things to Oscar and the company on its face lately," one rival promoter remarked. "How does it help your company to say publicly most of our fighters aren't with us [contractually], they're with Al Haymon?"

That's a question for which there as yet seems no clear answer. But fragmented relationships are commonplace in boxing, and both De La Hoya and Schaefer have acknowledged a rift. However that repairs itself, one thing is clear.

"I started Golden Boy to help boxing, and I'm not even close to accomplishing that goal," De La Hoya said. "I've hired people, and I've fired people. People come and go left and right. If people are faithful with me, honest with me, we can live happily ever after. Eric Gomez, my matchmaker, has been my friend since I was 5. We've been through thick and thin. He's never done me wrong. If he saw me on the ground, he'd pick me up. Unfortunately in boxing you don't have too many like that.

"I've seen many people start in boxing with good intentions, but things happen. I believe you can be successful in this business without pettiness. I believe everybody can co-exist. If it's done right, everybody can make money and be successful. But you have egos. Pride gets in the way. If you have two elephants fighting, everybody around them suffers. Unfortunately it happens. Sometimes you have to shake the tree until the bad apples fall out. Then new apples grow. Believe me, I've shaken that tree many times. I'm not afraid to do it.

"Being a promoter is very difficult, but I have to go back to my roots with the fighters. Golden Boy Promotions is a business, but it's not a business of screwing the fighters. It's promoting the best fighters and the best fights. It's why I got into this. My motivation has always been, 'let's be fair.' Greed is a bad thing. It's not good for nobody."

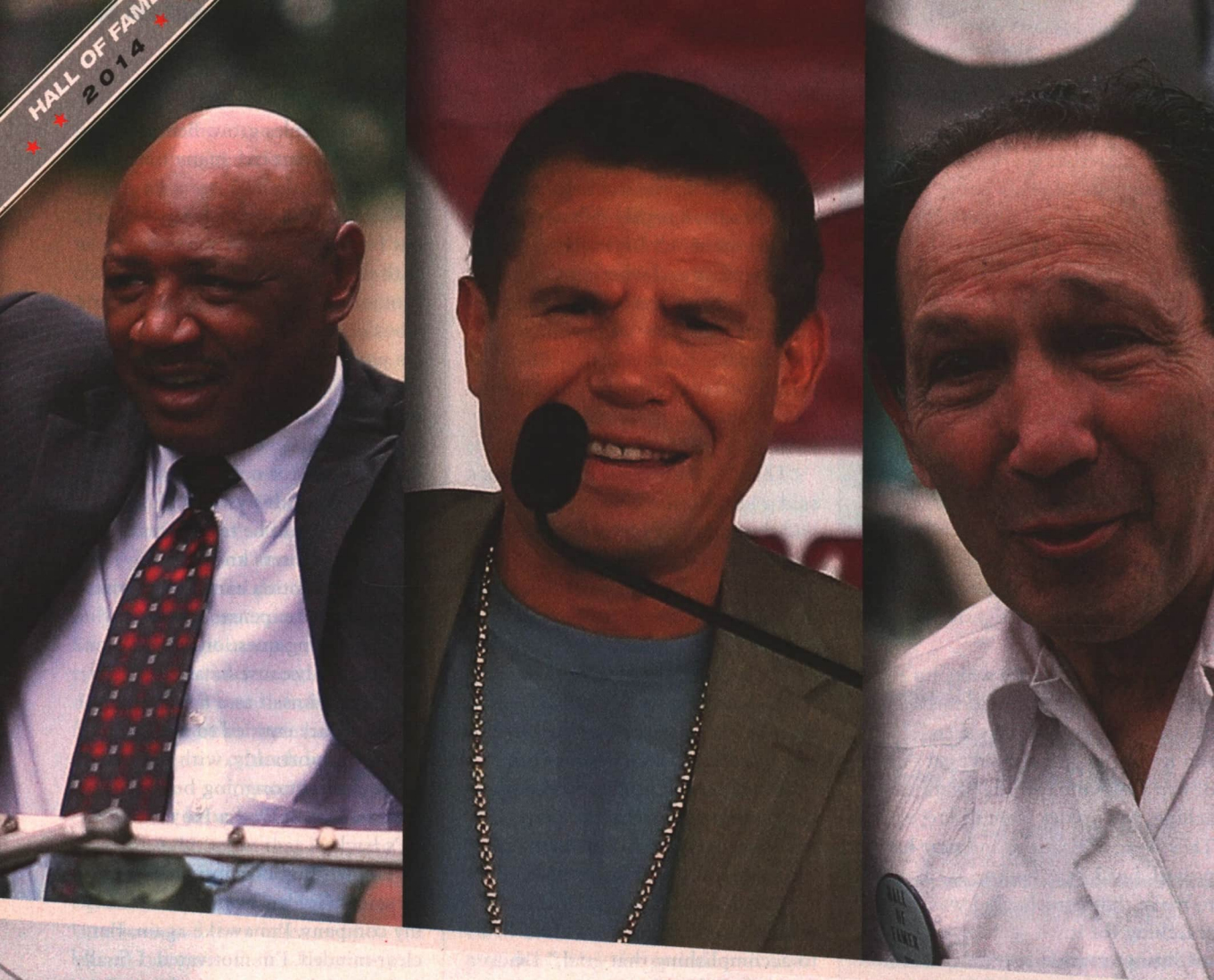
De la Hoya always said his company would be transparent, letting his fighters know exactly what a promotion earned and what was left after expenses. He says fighters asking questions doesn't bother him because he asked questions himself as a fighter and feels they are entitled to answers.

Most importantly, with his personal fight ongoing but now under control, De La Hoya says he's back.

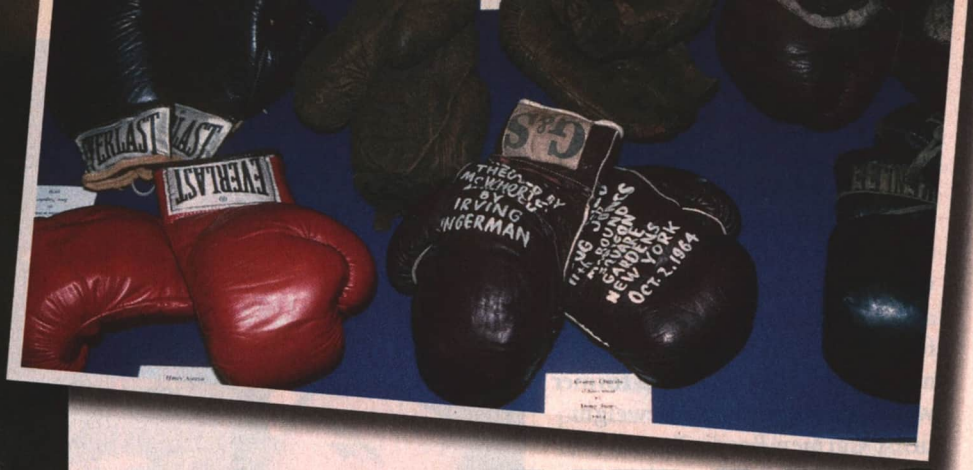
"Golden Boy Promotions is me," he said. "Golden Boy Promotions is my company. I'm awake again. I'm clear-minded. I'm motivated. I finally feel grateful for so many things. I feel alive. I'm not going nowhere. Somebody woke up the sleeping giant. I'm going to be involved like never before. Promoters and managers never laced up the gloves. They don't know what it's like. I know what a fighter is feeling. I know when they are happy and when they're sad. I think like a fighter. There's absolutely nothing wrong with that.

"I feel at peace with myself. I just started to feel that. When I was a kid, I was angry all the time. That was part of those bottled up emotions. I've finally let those go. I'm making amends to a lot of people. I feel very positive. I want to use boxing as a vehicle to be of service, to impact people with the same disease I have. The sky's the limit for Golden Boy Promotions."

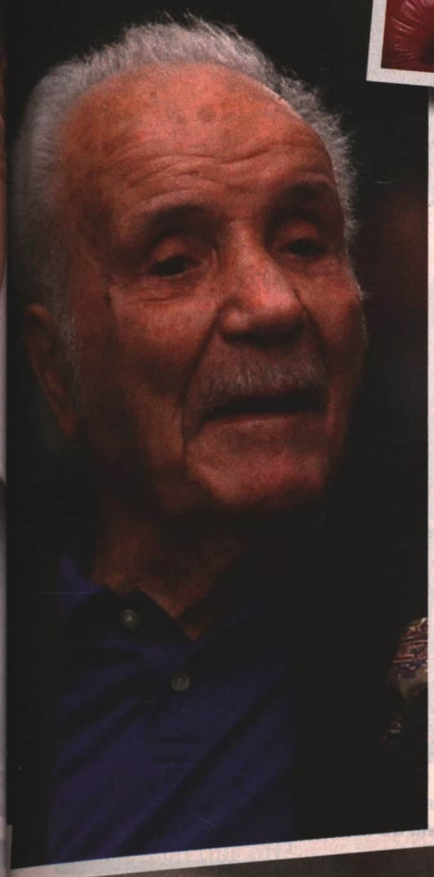
And, one hopes, for the Golden Boy, too.


HALL OF FAME
2014

INTERNATIONAL
BOXING
HALL OF FAME
MUSEUM
Another Great Reason to Visit
Canastota, N.Y.

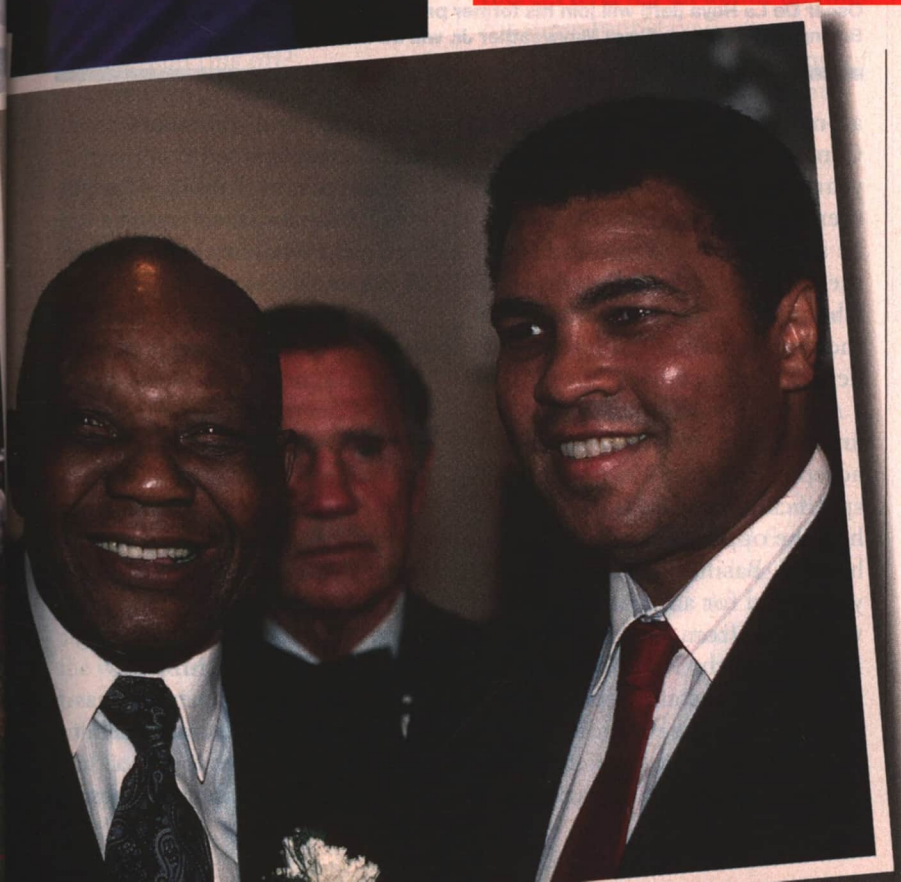


A cavalcade of boxing greats have graced the grounds of the International Boxing Hall of Fame, including (above left to right and bottom) Marvin Hagler, Julio Cesar Chavez, Willie Pep, Jake LaMotta, Jersey Joe Walcott and Muhammad Ali.



25 YEARS AND COUNTING

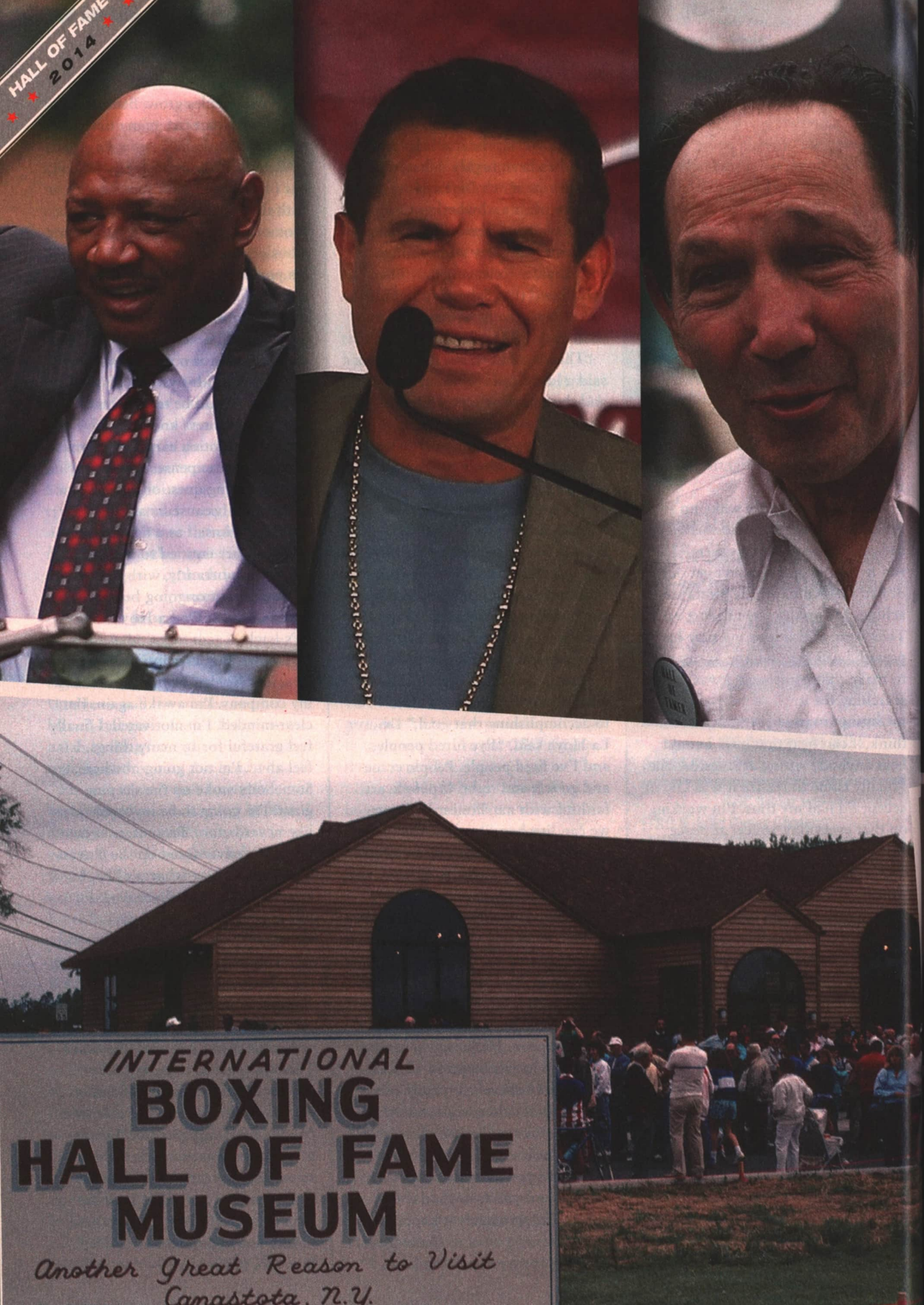
THE INTERNATIONAL BOXING HALL OF FAME STARTED MODESTLY AS A TRIBUTE TO CARMEN BASILIO BUT EVOLVED INTO 'BOXING HEAVEN' By **Bernard Fernandez**

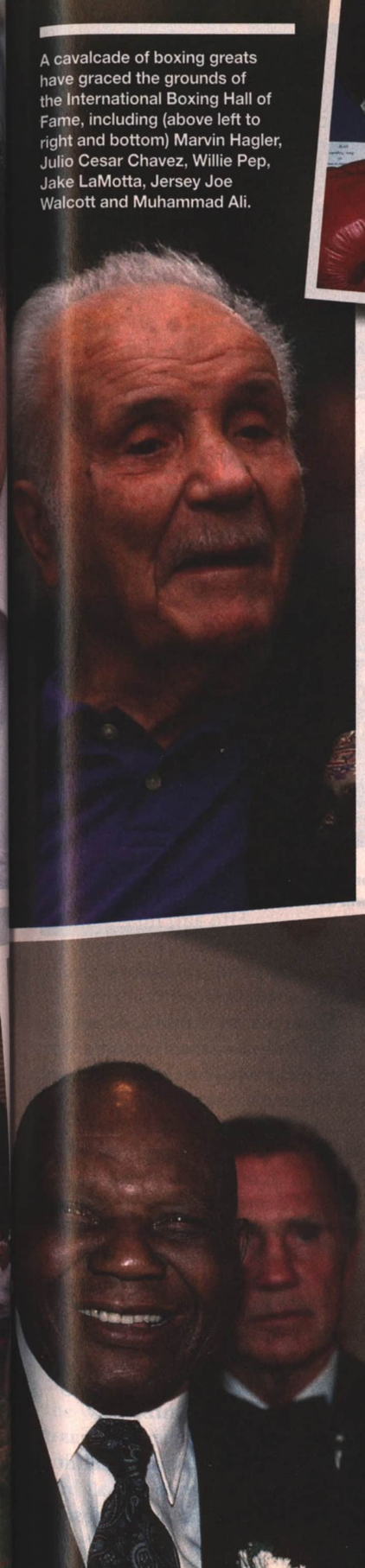


It began as a vague notion that morphed into an intriguing idea, then a focused project and, finally, into an amazing reality.

The International Boxing Hall of Fame, located in the tiny Village of Canastota in central New York, will commemorate its 25th anniversary from June 5 through 8. That the IBHOF has endured so long and so successfully – or that it came into existence at all – would be described by some as a bigger upset than Buster Douglas' knockout of Mike Tyson.

But Ed Brophy, who has served as executive director of the IBHOF since its inception, doesn't believe it's any kind of upset at all that the shared dream of he and a lot of other Canastota residents eventually was fulfilled just off Exit





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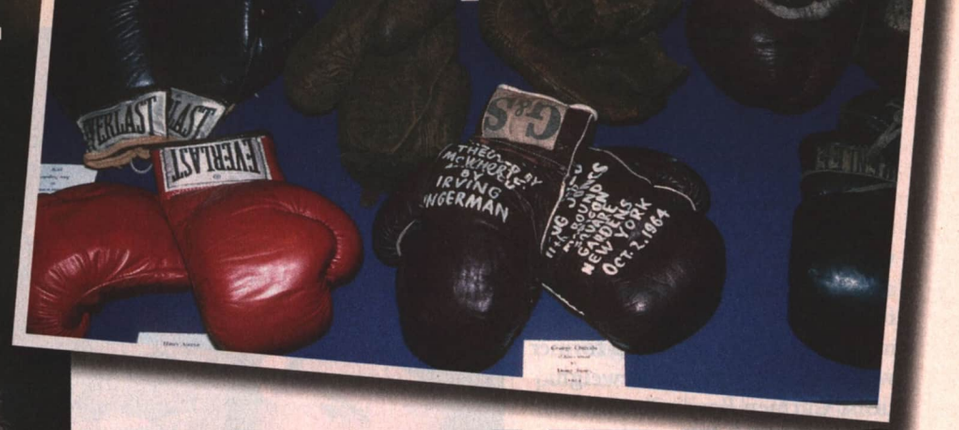

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34 of the New York State Thruway. Isn't boxing largely about underdogs with an unconquerable fighting spirit who somehow beat the odds and rise to the occasion? Guys, for instance, like Canastota's most famous son, the late former welterweight and middleweight titlist Carmen Basilio?

"Carmen didn't have the physical gifts of some of the other great champions, but he had the desire," Brophy said in recalling the revered "Upstate Onion Farmer," who was 85 when he died on Nov. 7, 2012, in Rochester, N.Y. "But he had that burning desire. He worked hard, he was dedicated, he had a big heart. We (the small army of volunteers who were and continue to be the driving force behind the IBHOF) always remind ourselves in difficult times, 'This is how Carmen accomplished his goals.'

"If you truly believe in something and you work very hard to make it happen, you surely have a much better chance of it actually happening."

During one of boxing's golden eras, the 1950s and into the 1960s, Carmen Basilio, who had served in the Marines from 1945 to 1947, was a source of civic pride in his hometown of Canastota. He was so tough, so resilient, that he participated in THE RING's Fight of Year five consecutive times, from 1955 through '59, a streak that is highly unlikely to be matched, much less broken. And whenever he stepped inside the ropes for his many televised bouts – his final record was 56-16-7, with 27 knockouts – this son (one of 10 siblings) of Italian immigrants, his battle-tested face a virtual road map of scar tissue, was always introduced as being from the town he helped make famous.

"I've lived in New York City all of my life, but I've heard of Canastota since I was maybe 8 years old," actor Danny Aiello, then 64, said in 1998, the year he served as grand marshal for the IBHOF's annual Parade of Champions. "I always knew that the first opportunity I had to get here, I would come."

Oscar De La Hoya (left) will join his former promoter, Bob Arum, in the International Boxing Hall of Fame. Floyd Mayweather Jr. will do the same after he retires.

A self-described "frustrated amateur fighter," Aiello said he accepted the grand marshal gig specifically because it afforded him the opportunity to be near his idol, Basilio. For a lot of years, and for a lot of visitors who came from near and far, Basilio was the IBHOF's most endearing constant, a pied piper of pugilism who embodied all of what fight fans have come to believe are the highest virtues of a tough and sometimes unforgiving sport.

"I am one of, I think, 42 nephews," Billy Backus, himself a former welterweight champion, said of his uncle Carmen in 2013. "I'm the only crazy bastard that took up boxing. Everybody else went to school. But we all had a hero. Carmen was our hero. He was the star of the family."

It was with the idea of commemorating the achievements of Basilio, and to a somewhat lesser degree Backus (who, his brief reign as a 147-pound titlist notwithstanding, is not among the IBHOF's 121 "Modern" inductees), that some of Canastota's citizens decided something needed to be done to pay a visible, lasting tribute to those

men and, through extension, to boxing itself.

"A press conference was held in February of 1984 to announce that the Village of Canastota would actively work on establishing an International Boxing Hall of Fame and Museum," said Brophy, who noted that the original idea, first floated in 1982, was to "put on a little boxing showcase" and scrounge up enough money to commission statues of Basilio and Backus.

They say big oaks from little acorns grow. Following that press conference, which was far more grandiose in its vision of what the future might hold than in its execution, the IBHOF began as a small office in Canastota Town Hall that comprised little more than a desk and a telephone. There was much work to be done, and what reasonable person outside of the village itself could possibly have imagined that a place with a population of roughly 4,000 souls could actually pull this off?

It has been suggested in some quarters that Canastotans were inspired and spurred into action by another little miracle that had taken root and flourished in nearby Cooperstown, N.Y., site of the National Baseball Museum and Hall of Fame. Located just 49 miles from Canastota as the crow flies and 71 miles away by car along mostly winding back roads, Cooperstown is another pleasant and even smaller hamlet (population: 1,852) that evokes images of Norman Rockwell paintings and Currier and Ives lithographs. Each has the warm, fuzzy feel of a small-town America that metropolises like New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles couldn't possibly duplicate.

Aaron Pryor, the former junior welterweight champion from Cincinnati who was inducted into the IBHOF in 1996, said he has attended 18 Induction Weekends after falling in love with Canastota because it is so close-knit and accommodating for the fighters who make the annual trek there, as if it were a family reunion.

"It's like a dream that comes true every time I'm here," he said during the 2013 Induction Weekend. "You can get hooked. If you come once, you're probably going to want to come year after year after year. To me, it's one of the greatest feelings you could ever have to come to this special place. I look forward to it like a little kid looks forward to Christmas. The fans here just take you in. They *embrace* you.

"If the Hall of Fame was in, say, New York City, I don't think it would feel the same. Too many different things to do or see there. Here, it's all about boxing for these four days."

Brophy, for one, rejects some of the parallels that are frequently drawn between Cooperstown and Canastota. For one thing, baseball's Hall of Fame was founded in Cooperstown in 1936 in large part because of the erroneous belief that the sport was "invented" by Abner Doubleday, a Union general during the Civil War, and that the first game – played under rules he presumably had drafted as a cadet at West Point – took place in a cow pasture there in 1839. The inspirational figure for Canastota's founding of the IBHOF, Basilio, at the very least was a real boxer, and quite an accomplished one at that.

Another significant difference is that baseball's Hall has barred, for various transgressions, such otherwise statistics-worthy players as Pete Rose and "Shoeless" Joe Jackson, while boxing, once dubbed the "red light district of sports" by New York columnist Jimmy Cannon, is less discerning in its selection process, at least so far as it pertains to the strict adherence to a moralistic code of conduct. Among those enshrined in the IBHOF are the late Sonny Liston, who was arrested 19 times before he won the heavyweight championship in 1962 and had indirect ties to organized crime's two most notorious boxing manipulators, Frankie Carbo and Frank "Blinky" Palermo. Other inductees include promoter Don King (who did time on a manslaughter conviction), Mike Tyson (convicted of rape) and Jake LaMotta, a charter inductee in 1990 who acknowledged that he threw a fight to Billy Fox in 1947.

"Our board of directors and screening committee decided that fighters should be judged primarily on the basis of their accomplishments in the ring," Brophy said 20-plus years ago, when the question of who or who shouldn't be considered for induction on idealistic grounds was first broached. "Our board is very comfortable with the guidelines that were established."

Put it this way: Baseball and boxing are different animals, just as Cooperstown and Canastota are different in their own way. One size apparently does not fit all, and maybe that is a good thing.

"We didn't look down the road at Cooperstown as any driving force for what we wanted to do," Brophy stressed. "The Village of Canastota looked first and foremost within its own heart. It was never our intention to imitate what someplace else had

THE RING MAGAZINE

done to pay tribute to another sport. There was never a thought of comparing what we wanted to do with Cooperstown."

All well and good, but the National Baseball Hall of Fame gained instant credibility, despite Abner Doubleday's dubious credentials and Cooperstown's out-of-the-way location, because its first induction ceremony in 1939 was graced by such superstars as Babe Ruth, Ty Cobb, Walter Johnson, Christy Mathewson, Honus Wagner, Nap Lajoie and Tris Speaker.

What Brophy and his fellow dreamers had to wonder, during all the spaghetti dinner and bake-sale fundraisers in the five years leading up to the official opening of the IBHOF, was this: If we build it, will people come?

"There were no assurances, just a heartfelt drive by Village residents to do something good for boxing, because boxing deserved such a place," said Brophy, who pointed out that Canastota's ties to boxing predated Basilio, and by quite a bit.

"The historic Erie Canal is a water passageway through the State of New York," he continued. "It goes right through Canastota. In the early days, in the 1800s, there was a lot of bare-knuckle boxing in and around Canastota. In the 1930s and '40s, high school boxing was popular and Canastota had a team that always fared very well. Some of our high school boxers went on to star at the intercollegiate level, at Syracuse University and other schools.

"Carmen and Billy were, of course, our world champions, but we also had Dickie DeVeronica, who was a ranked welterweight. Tony Graziano, the owner of Graziano's Italian restaurant in Canastota, was a longtime promoter of amateur and professional boxing. So, really, we've had a hundred years of history with boxing. The sport has been good to us, and we've been good to it."

It took those five years – the many mom-and-pop fundraisers were augmented by a bank loan and some corporate sponsorships – for Canastota to come up with the $150,000 necessary to buy a parcel of land and construct a museum. Floyd Patterson, Kid Gavilan and Joe Frazier were among the notables attending the ribbon-cutting at the museum's 1989 opening. Yet the litmus test – that first induction class a year later – had yet to prove it could draw in boxing's equivalents of Ruth, Cobb, Mathewson, Johnson and Wagner.

To the amazement of a lot of skeptics, the big names did come. In force. Of the 53 charter inductees, 20 of whom were in the Modern category, 14 lent their names, legitimacy and physical presence to the proceedings. How's this for a lineup of heavy hitters? Muhammad Ali, Henry Armstrong, Basilio, Billy Conn, Bob Foster, Gavilan, Emile Griffith, LaMotta, Archie Moore, Jose Napoles, Willie Pep, Sandy Saddler, Jersey Joe Walcott and Ike Willams were all on the stage to accept their Hall of Fame rings and applause from an audience of around 5,000 fight fans.

"That was our first induction class, so we were basically a startup operation," said Brophy. The IBHOF has undergone two major expansions since then. Induction Weekends now draw upwards of 20,000 for a full slate of activities that includes the Banquet of Champions, a theme night at the Rusty Rail, a golf tournament, a five-kilometer

CLASS OF 2014

The 12 boxing figures who will be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in June

MODERN

Last bout no earlier than 1943

JOE CALZAGHE
OSCAR DE LA HOYA
FELIX TRINIDAD

OLD-TIMER

Last bout must fall between 1893 and 1942

GEORGE CHANEY
CHARLES LEDOUX
MIKE O'DOWD

PIONEER

Last pro bout in or before 1892

TOM ALLEN

NON-PARTICIPANT

EUGENE CORRI, referee
BARRY HEARN, promoter
RICHARD STEELE, referee

OBSERVER

GRAHAM HOUSTON, journalist
NEIL LEIFER, photographer

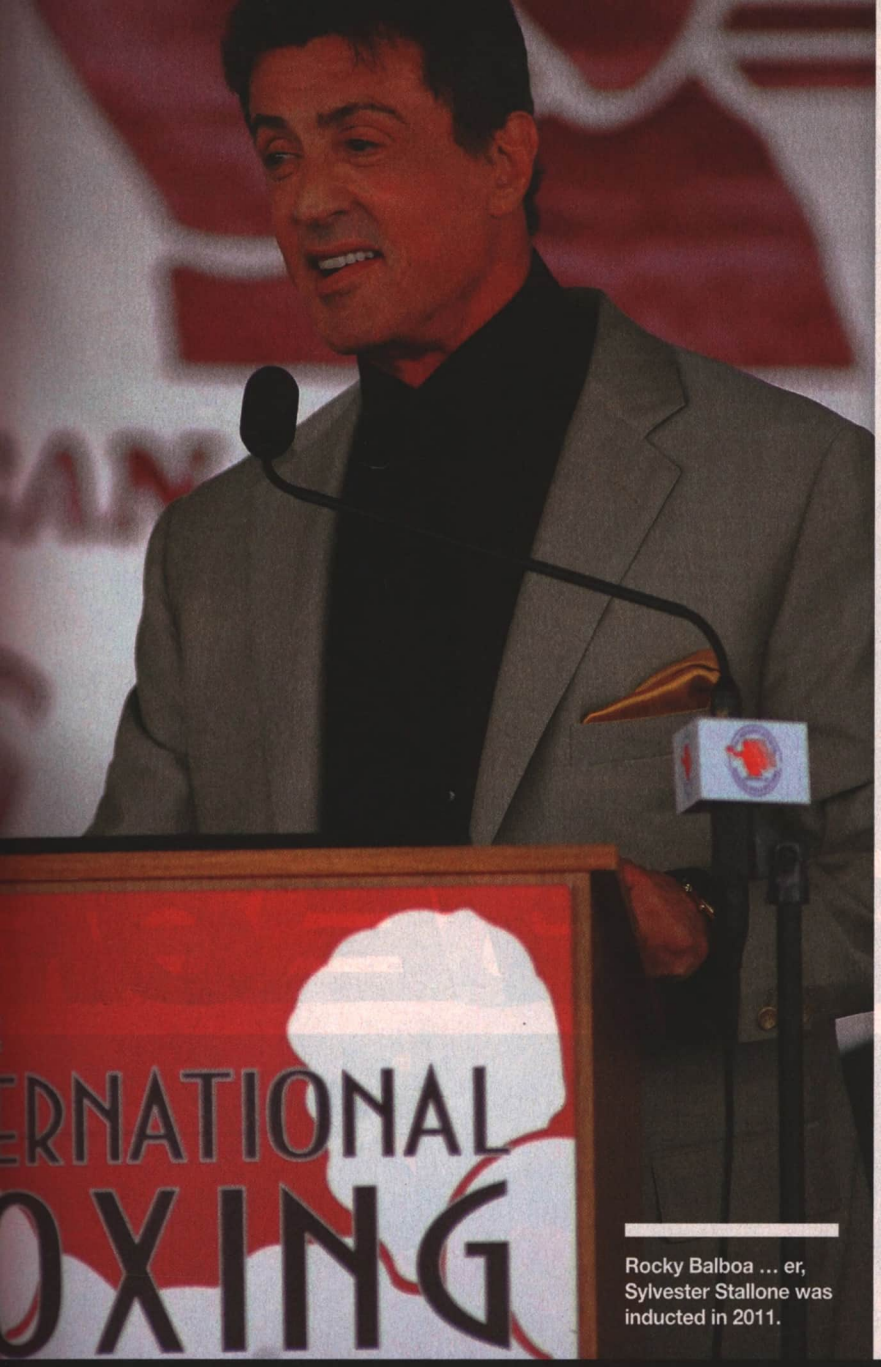
THE BIG THREE AND STEELE

CALZAGHE

TRINIDAD

STEELE

The International Boxing Hall of Fame Class of 2014 features three true stars – Oscar De La Hoya, Felix Trinidad and Joe Calzaghe – and a prominent referee, Richard Steele. You can read about De La Hoya on Page 40 of this issue. To read feature stories on Trinidad, Calzaghe and Steele, scan the QR codes at left or go to http://bit.ly/QaZ6Qh (Trinidad), http://bit.ly/1nQaFYQ (Calzaghe) and http://bit.ly/1hypdLL (Steele).



Rocky Balboa ... er, Sylvester Stallone was inducted in 2011.

"Fun Run" with the champions, a silent auction, a card show, autograph sessions, the parade and, of course, the actual induction ceremony.

"The turnout has steadily grown. Some induction years are more well-attended because a certain inductee or inductees have a higher profile, but that's the way it is with every Hall of Fame. This year's Induction Weekend should also draw well because of who's being inducted (Oscar De La Hoya, Felix Trinidad and Joe Calzaghe are the headliners) and our 25th anniversary celebration, but really we consider each and every year to be equally important. Induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame is the sport's highest honor. We try very hard to make it a magical occasion not only for the honorees, but for our visitors."

Philadelphia-based promoter J Russell Peltz, a 2004 inductee, spoke for many when he described what it means to him to make his annual trek to paradise.

"Every time I get to the toll booth I think, 'Welcome to boxing heaven,'" Peltz said. "And that's what Canastota is: boxing heaven." RING

INAUGURAL CLASS

Some of the most legendary boxers in history comprised the inaugural class of the International Boxing Hall of Fame. And many of them showed up for their induction in 1990, giving the upstart organization instant credibility. Here is that class:

MODERN

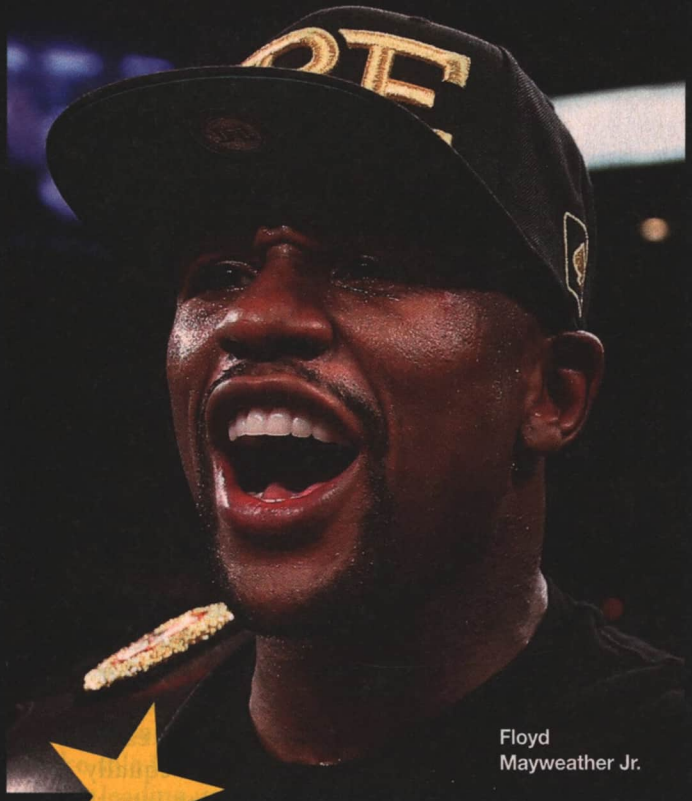
Muhammad Ali
Henry Armstrong
Carmen Basilio
Ezzard Charles
Billy Conn
Bob Foster
Joe Frazier
Kid Gavilan
Emile Griffith
Jake LaMotta
Joe Louis
Rocky Marciano
Carlos Monzon
Archie Moore
Jose Napoles
Willie Pep
Sugar Ray Robinson
Sandy Saddler
Jersey Joe Walcott
Ike Williams

OLD TIMER

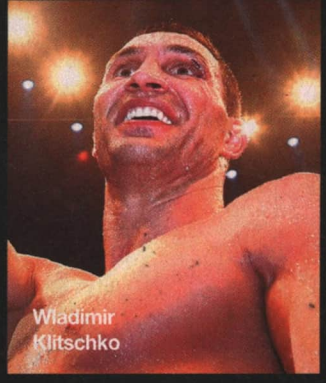
Abe Attell
Jack Britton
Tony Canzoneri
James J. Corbett
Jack Dempsey
George Dixon
Jim Driscoll
Bob Fitzsimmons
Joe Gans
Harry Greb
Peter Jackson
James J. Jeffries
Jack Johnson
Stanley Ketchel
Sam Langford
Benny Leonard
Terry McGovern
Barney Ross
Gene Tunney
Mickey Walker
Jimmy Wilde

PIONEERS

Jack Broughton
Jem Mace
Daniel Mendoza
Tom Sayers
John L. Sullivan

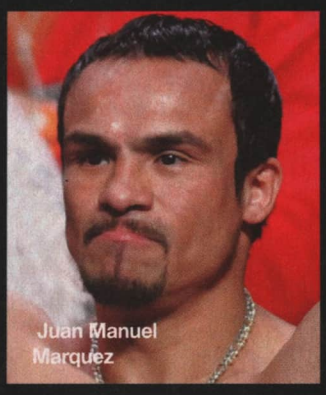


Floyd Mayweather Jr.



Wladimir Klitschko

Adonis Stevenson

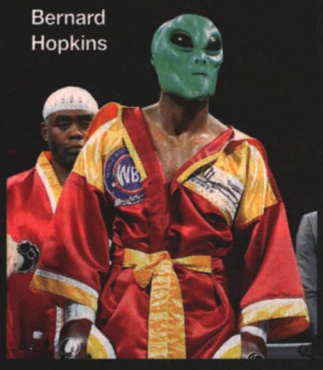


Juan Manuel Marquez

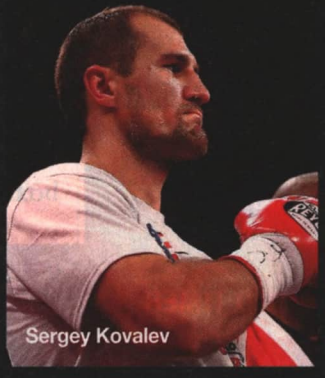
Canelo Alvarez

The RING STATE OF

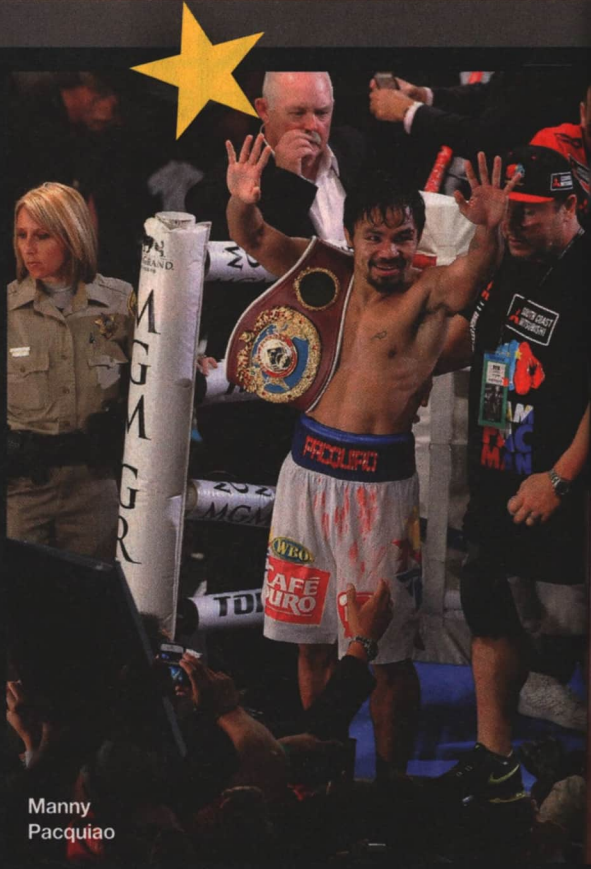
By **David Greisman**



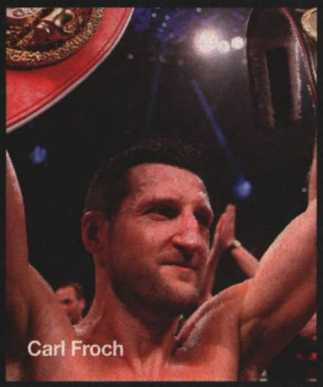
Bernard Hopkins



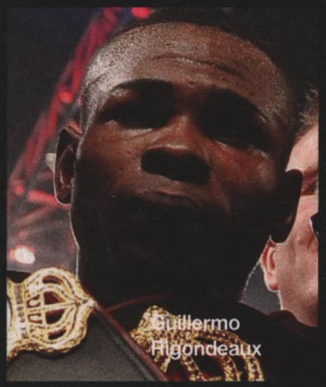
Sergey Kovalev



Manny Pacquiao



Carl Froch



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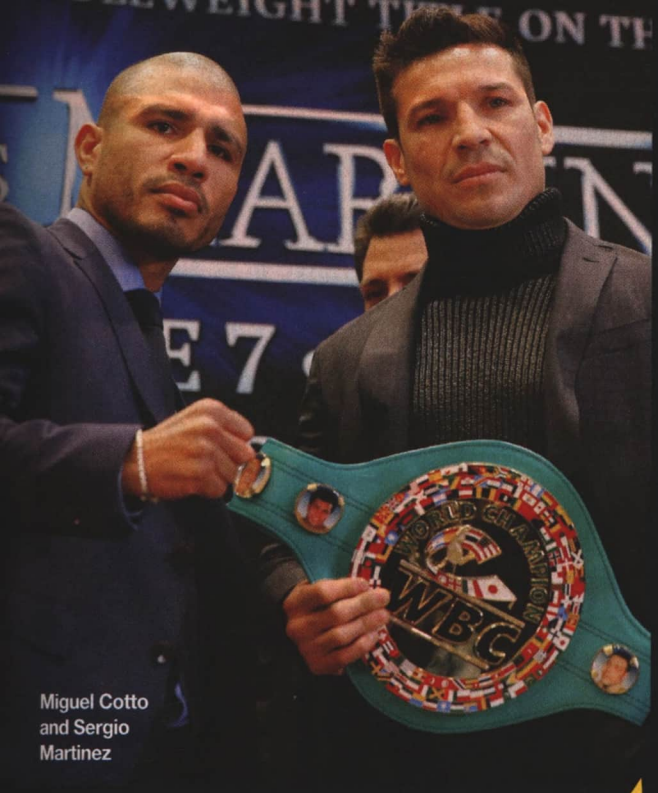
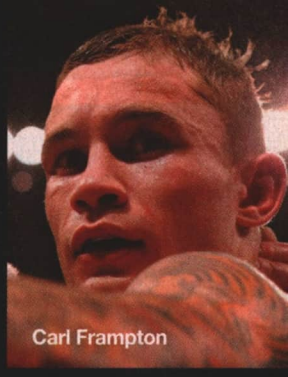
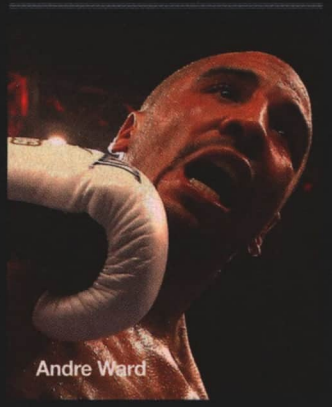
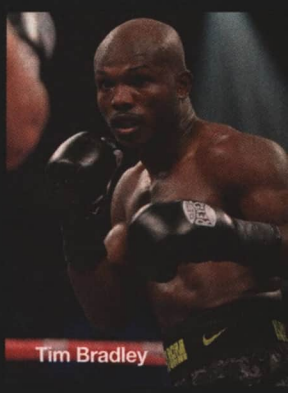


Miguel Cotto and Sergio Martinez

Mikey Garcia

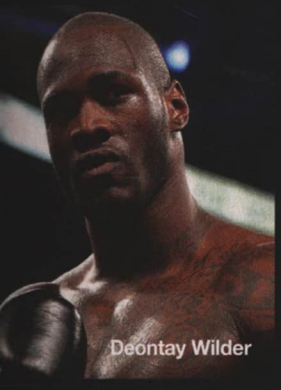

Carl Frampton


Andre Ward


Tim Bradley

THE GAME

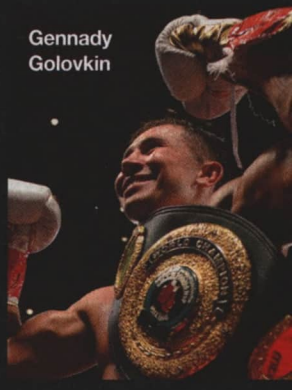
Compiled by **David Greisman, Martin Mulcahey and Anson Wainwright**


Deontay Wilder

Ruslan Provodnikov

Our annual State of the Game report provides 17 snapshots of boxing's weight classes, and each one presents a complex image. There are the titleholders and stars in the foreground, looming large when it comes to the business and the belts. There are the contenders who provide depth. And then there are the prospects, some who are prominently positioned and the rest lurking distant in the background.

Boxing writers David Greisman, Martin Mulcahey and Anson Wainwright worked to fit as many details as possible into a limited frame — in this case, each picture was worth between 400 and 500 words. They turned to the rankings, the coverage and their own observations so as to provide overviews of each division as it existed in mid-April, focusing on the fighters who you should know now and the faces you can expect to see more of in the future. »


Gennady Golovkin

Terence Crawford

Wladimir Klitschko carries the heavyweight division on his broad shoulders.

There have long been two constants to the heavyweight division: the Klitschko brothers on top and no one else anywhere near good enough to dethrone them. Vitali Klitschko recently retired to focus on politics in Ukraine, however. That leaves RING Champion Wladimir Klitschko with three world titles and a horde of contenders, pretenders and prospects vying for a shot at the fourth world title and/or at Klitschko. The good news is that many of these boxers are more willing to face each other these days rather than waiting for a Klitschko fight. The bad news is that what was once boxing's marquee division still seems full of candidates whose imperfections make them undeserving of carrying the torch once Wladimir departs.

THE STARS

Klitschko continues to dispatch no-hopers, though he did dominate top challenger Alexander Povetkin last year in one of the least aesthetically pleasing performances ever in a division that has seen plenty of stinkers. Klitschko was scheduled to face Alex Leapai on April 26. Meanwhile, the title vacated by Vitali was set to be filled via a May rematch between Bermane Stiverne and Chris Arreola; Stiverne won the first time around. The winner will be mandated to defend against Deontay Wilder, who has stopped all 31 of his opponents but whose power and chin are still untested against whatever this division has to offer as top opposition.

THE DEPTH

Wilder is the flashiest of the potential contenders, but he isn't the only one. There's also Kubrat Pulev, whose résumé is better for the moment than that of fellow unbeaten prospect Tyson Fury, who will meet former title challenger Dereck Chisora in a rematch this summer. Also in the mix are Bryant Jennings and Mike Perez, who were scheduled to fight one another on May 24. Meanwhile, Vyacheslav Glazkov recently topped Tomasz Adamek, Andy Ruiz will need to lose weight in order to compete, and Robert Helenius remains undefeated but has lost any momentum he once had because of injury-related inactivity.

BEST PUNCHER
WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO

BEST BOXER
WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO

MOST PROTECTED
LUCAS BROWNE

IS HE STILL AROUND?
FRANS BOTHA

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO VS. DEONTAY WILDER

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
KUBRAT PULEV

MOST FUN TO WATCH
TYSON FURY

ON THE WAY UP
VYACHESLAV GLAZKOV

ON THE WAY DOWN
TOMASZ ADAMEK

BEST FIGHT OF 2013
ARTUR SZPILKA KO 6 MIKE MOLLO

THE FUTURE

Guys such as Wilder, Jennings and Fury have demonstrated that there is opportunity for younger heavyweights to work their way up. That's good news for prospects early in their careers such as Olympic gold medalist Anthony Joshua of the United Kingdom and U.S. Olympian Dominic Breazeale. The more young heavyweights the better, given the wealth of old names, former cruiserweights and past failures who otherwise fill up the rankings, including but sadly not limited to Ruslan Chagaev, Steve Cunningham, Kevin Johnson, Lateef Kayode, Fres Oquendo, Samuel Peter, Odlanier Solis (who Tony Thompson just beat) and Antonio Tarver. ★

TITLEHOLDERS BY COUNTRY

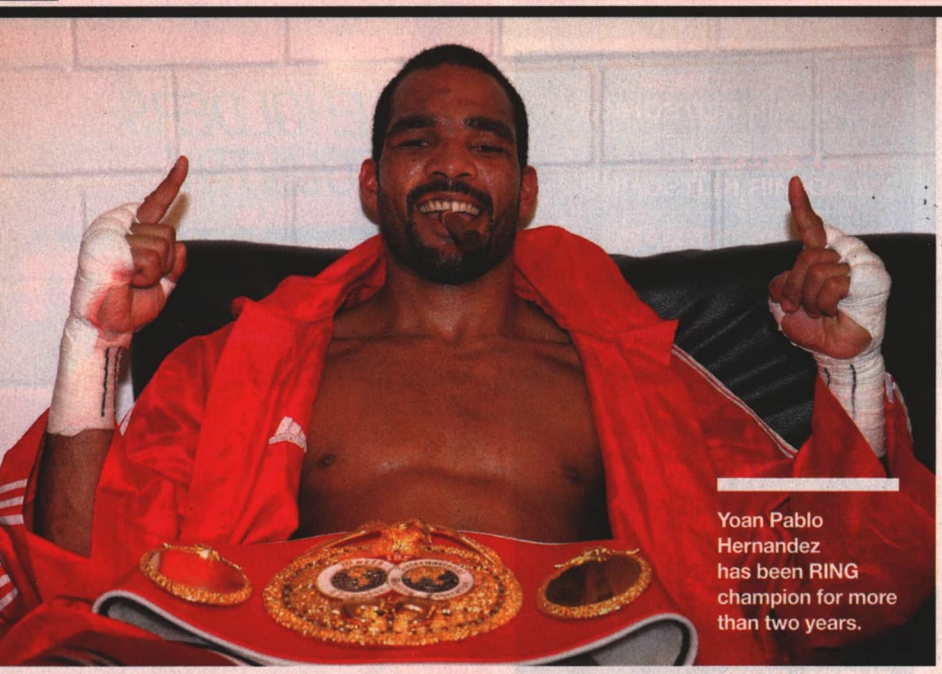
There are a total of 56 fighters with world titles, and they hail from 20 countries. For the second straight year, the top five countries are the United States, Japan, Mexico, Russia and Cuba, with Argentina moving up to tie Cuba for that fifth spot.

Five new countries are on the list this year: Armenia, as Arthur Abraham regained a super middleweight title; Cameroon, after Sakio Bika won a belt at 168; Canada, with Adonis Stevenson becoming light heavyweight champion; Spain, as Kiko Martinez won a title at junior featherweight; and Thailand, thanks to junior bantamweight Srisaket Sor Rungvisai and flyweight Amnat Ruenroeng.

Seven countries from last year's list, meanwhile, are now off: Australia, due to Daniel Geale's middleweight title loss; China, as minimumweight Xiong Zhao Zhong was defeated; Colombia, due to the defeat of Jhonatan Romero; Indonesia, whose Chris John is now gone; Namibia, due to the defeat of bantamweight Paulus Ambunda; Nicaragua, as Roman Gonzalez vacated his junior flyweight belt to move up in weight; and Puerto Rico, as Rocky Martinez lost his junior lightweight title.

Note: This list is as of April 20 and includes RING champions and WBA, WBC, IBF and WBO titleholders, with no "interim" titleholders included, nor "regular" WBA titleholders in divisions where there is also a "super" titleholder.

UNITED STATES	12
JAPAN	8
MEXICO	6
RUSSIA	4
ARGENTINA	3
CUBA	3
PHILIPPINES	3
GERMANY	2
SOUTH AFRICA	2
THAILAND	2
UNITED KINGDOM	2
ARMENIA	1
CAMEROON	1
CANADA	1
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	1
KAZAKHSTAN	1
PANAMA	1
POLAND	1
SPAIN	1
UKRAINE	1



Yoan Pablo Hernandez has been RING champion for more than two years.

The allure of the cruiserweight division, for the brief time it has been around, has been the fact that its fighters have the power of boxers who generations ago would've been considered heavyweights combined with the speed and activity rarely seen in today's big men. That selling point still hasn't garnered the 200-pound division much attention in the United States, but most of the talent is from Europe anyway. And they are drawing well enough overseas to keep them competing against each other at cruiserweight instead of making the leap into the land of the giants.

THE STARS

RING Champion Yoan Pablo Hernandez returned last year from an extended layoff and scored a win over Alexander Alekseev. He was supposed to return in March, only to pull out because of a medical condition that left his stomach lining infected. Marco Huck's title reign has now lasted more than four years, though he may very well have remained at heavyweight in 2012 had he not lost controversially to Alexander Povetkin. Huck wrapped up his trilogy with Ola Afolabi last year, finishing 2-0-1, and then started 2014 with a rematch win over Firat Arslan.

Krzysztof Wlodarczyk is approaching four years with his belt, which has only been defended six times in that span. He has traveled for half of those bouts, though, including last year's win in which he came off the canvas early to stop Rakhim Chakhkiev. His first fight in 2014 had not yet been set. Finally, there's Denis Lebedev, who lost his title by an 11th-round knockout to Guillermo Jones last year but regained it after Jones tested positive for a banned substance afterward. The fight was ruled a no-contest. An April rematch was canceled when Jones tested positive yet again.

BEST PUNCHER
MARCO HUCK

BEST BOXER
YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ

MOST PROTECTED
PAWEL KOLODZIEJ

IS HE STILL AROUND?
JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
MARCO HUCK VS. YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
GRIGORY DROZD

MOST FUN TO WATCH
MARCO HUCK

ON THE WAY UP
THABISO MCHUNU

ON THE WAY DOWN
GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI

BEST FIGHT OF 2013
GUILLERMO JONES KO 11 DENIS LEBEDEV

THE DEPTH

Afolabi was competitive even while coming up short in his three bouts with Huck. He deserves consideration. So, too, do six fighters with one loss on their records. Grigory Drozd suffered his only blemish in 2006. He, in turn, recently handed Mateusz Masternak his only setback. Chakhkiev was stopped in eight by Wlodarczyk last year. Dmytro Kucher dropped a close decision to Ilunga Makabu in 2013 as well. Makabu hasn't lost since his pro debut. His fellow South African, Thabiso Mchunu, begged last year for a shot at Eddie Chambers, got it and won. Chambers has since departed back to heavyweight, and we may soon be saying so long to familiar 40-somethings Arslan, Silvio Branco and Giacobbe Fragomeni. And the less said about Glen Johnson and Roy Jones Jr., the better.

THE FUTURE

A pair of light heavyweights from the United Kingdom have jumped up 25 pounds: Tony Bellew beat Valery Brudov in March, while Nathan Cleverly had not yet debuted at 200. And then there are undefeated prospects with various levels of pro experience: Pawel Kolodziej is 33-0 and, at 33, needs to step up; Yunier Dorticos is 16-0 and has knocked out everyone he has faced; and Olympic gold medalist Oleksandr Usyk was an amateur heavyweight, where the limit is 200 pounds, and turned pro late last year as a cruiserweight. ★

For years, light heavyweight was the division of aging stars who refused to leave the stage: Bernard Hopkins, Glen Johnson, Roy Jones Jr. and Antonio Tarver. Then came a youth movement, with Chad Dawson and Jean Pascal taking turns atop the throne. Now even they have fallen from the top, and only Hopkins remains with two world title belts once again around his waist. Hopkins is joined by a cast of newcomers and familiar faces.

THE STARS

Adonis Stevenson and Sergey Kovalev have seized power with power. Stevenson stopped Chad Dawson with one punch last year to become THE RING champion and, with additional knockout victories over Darnell Boone, Tavoris Cloud and Tony Bellew in 2013, he was named THE RING Fighter of the Year. He is scheduled to defend against Andrzej Fonfara in late May. Kovalev also scored four stoppages in 12 rounds in 2013, plowing through Gabriel Campillo, Cornelius White, Nathan Cleverly and Ismayl Sillakh, and he began 2014 with a win over Cedric Agnew.

Yet the anticipated Stevenson-Kovalev fight may be held up by the politics of promoters, networks and money, particularly as Stevenson is hoping to face Hopkins next and then Kovalev later. The 49-year-old Hopkins easily defeated Beibut Shumenov in April, unifying the WBA belt with a world title that Hopkins picked up from Tavoris Cloud last year and then defended against Karo Murat.

THE DEPTH

Shumenov will need to rebuild and show if he actually belongs among the top fighters at 175. The limited but entertaining Fonfara takes a big leap up in class by taking on Stevenson. Former champion Pascal is waiting in the wings following his January decision win over Lucian Bute and could be angling for a fight with fellow Quebec attraction Stevenson.

BEST PUNCHER
SERGEY KOVALEV

BEST BOXER
BERNARD HOPKINS

MOST PROTECTED
JUERGEN BRAEHMER

IS HE STILL AROUND?
EDISON MIRANDA

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
ADONIS STEVENSON VS. SERGEY KOVALEV

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
ANDRZEJ FONFARA

MOST FUN TO WATCH
SERGEY KOVALEV

ON THE WAY UP
ELEIDER ALVAREZ

ON THE WAY DOWN
CHAD DAWSON

BEST FIGHT OF 2013
ANDRZEJ FONFARA KO 9 GABRIEL CAMPILLO

Dawson hasn't resurfaced since his knockout loss. British fighters Nathan Cleverly and Tony Bellew appear to be headed to cruiserweight. Cleverly is coming off a knockout loss to Kovalev. Bellew, who was stopped by Stevenson last year, knocked out Valery Brudov in his first fight at 200 pounds in March. And Juergen Braehmer seems content to remain in Germany, getting paid decently to face lower-tier opposition.

THE FUTURE

Andre Ward moving up from 168 to the bigger challenges of 175 seems inevitable, though Ward has not sounded as if he is in any rush. Meanwhile, several undefeated prospects are on the rise: Eleider Alvarez, who is originally from Colombia but now calls Montreal home; Thomas Williams Jr. of the United States; Olympic gold medalist Egor Mekhontsev and former amateur champion Artur Beterbiev, both of Russia; and Swedish prospect Erik Skoglund. Many foreign fighters are now signing with American promoters, though the European market remains a viable one at light heavyweight. ★

Everyone wants to see Adonis Stevenson (pictured) fight Sergey Kovalev.

Carl Froch-George Groves II was expected to draw as many as 80,000 fans to Wembley Stadium.

Super middleweight became Andre Ward's division the moment he upset Mikkel Kessler in the opening round of the Super Six World Boxing Classic in 2009, and he sealed that status with his win over Carl Froch in the finale in 2011. In the years since, Ward and Froch have remained the Nos. 1 and 2 guys at 168, although there has been more talk about a rematch than there has been actual movement toward one. Meanwhile, others are jockeying for position and attention, reminding us that while the top two fighters are quite clear, this is more than a two-person division.

THE STARS

Ward has fought only twice since beating Froch, impressing by dominating and stopping the admittedly drained then-light heavyweight champion Chad Dawson in 2012 and then returning from an injury with a decision win over Edwin Rodriguez late last year. His next bout had yet to be announced, a situation that might be partially the result of Ward's attempts to part ways with his promoter. As for Froch, his four post-Ward wins included a beatdown of Lucian Bute, a revenge decision over Kessler, and a controversial stoppage of George Groves that saw Froch go down hard early on. Froch and Groves were scheduled to meet again on May 31.

THE DEPTH

Another titleholder is Sakio Bika, who hasn't been good enough to beat the best but is still good enough to be a litmus test for other prospects and contenders. His belt was stripped away from Ward and was most recently defended in a draw with Anthony Dirrell. And then there's Arthur Abraham, who seemed destined for the scrap heap. Abraham edged Robert Stieglitz in their rubber match, picking up a sanctioning body title in the process, and perhaps a fourth fight should be made. But those aren't the only significant names: James DeGale, who barely lost to Groves in 2011, is looking ready for prime time, and Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.'s move to 168 could make for some intriguing pairings.

BEST PUNCHER
CARL FROCH

BEST BOXER
ANDRE WARD

MOST PROTECTED
STANYSLAV KASHTANOV

IS HE STILL AROUND?
PETER MANFREDO JR.

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM
GEORGE GROVES VS. JAMES DEGALE II

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT
JAMES DEGALE

MOST FUN TO WATCH
CARL FROCH

ON THE WAY UP
JAMES DEGALE

ON THE WAY DOWN
THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN

BEST FIGHT OF 2013
CARL FROCH UD 12 MIKKEL KESSLER

THE FUTURE

We'll see whether Anthony Dirrell will get another shot. We'll wonder whether Andre Dirrell will remove himself from the side of the milk carton. And we'll wait to find out whether Kessler wants back in the mix. One prospect, Badou Jack, must attempt to rebound from a first-round knockout loss to Derek Edwards. The verdict isn't in yet on several others, including Fedor Chudinov, Jesse Hart, Brandon Gonzales, Stanyslav Kashtanov, Gilbert Ramirez Sanchez and Maxim Vlasov. ★

RANKING THE DIVISIONS

THE WEIGHT CLASSES 1-17 BASED ON THE QUALITY AND DEPTH OF THE BOXERS.

1. FLYWEIGHT
2. WELTERWEIGHT
3. JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT
4. JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT
5. MIDDLEWEIGHT
6. LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT
7. JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT
8. SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
9. CRUISERWEIGHT
10. BANTAMWEIGHT
11. FEATHERWEIGHT
12. JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT
13. HEAVYWEIGHT
14. LIGHTWEIGHT
15. STRAWWEIGHT
16. JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT
17. JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT

Gennady Golovkin was expected at press time to face Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. on July 19.

BEST PUNCHER
GENNADY GOLOVKIN

BEST BOXER:
SERGIO MARTINEZ

MOST PROTECTED:
DANNY JACOBS

IS HE STILL AROUND?
BRONCO MCKART

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM:
SERGIO MARTINEZ VS. GENNADY GOLOVKIN

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT:
MARTIN MURRAY

MOST FUN TO WATCH:
GENNADY GOLOVKIN

ON THE WAY UP:
PATRICK NIELSEN

ON THE WAY DOWN:
FERNANDO GUERRERO

BEST FIGHT OF 2013:
DARREN BARKER SD 12 DANIEL GEALE

There is a clear championship lineage at middleweight that dates back more than a decade, from Bernard Hopkins to Jermain Taylor to Kelly Pavlik to Sergio Martinez. But as the sanctioning bodies began to take their belts away from these champions, that brought more attention to a wealth of new titleholders and contenders competing outside of the United States, particularly in Europe. The champ need not be the proverbial straw that stirs the drink, a reality that allowed for the rise of a power-puncher named Gennady Golovkin while Martinez sat on the sideline, recovering from injuries. Their collision now seems inevitable, though they are not the only middleweights worth monitoring.

THE STARS

Martinez is scheduled to defend against Miguel Cotto on June 7 in what will be the champion's first bout back since April 2013, when he barely edged Martin Murray and aggravated injuries dating back to his 2012 win over Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. Golovkin, who is likely to face Chavez this summer, has built a bandwagon after four knockout wins on HBO and two overseas in Monte Carlo. Peter Quillin picked up his world title in 2012 with a rarity: scoring six knockdowns but winning by decision. He made his third defense with a near-shutout decision over Lukas Konecny on April 19. And Felix Sturm, a longtime fixture at 160, once again holds a belt after his surprising stoppage of Darren Barker, who suffered another hip injury and subsequently retired.

THE DEPTH

There are a few fighters highly deserving of title shots. One is Murray, who fought to a draw with Sturm and came up just short against Martinez. Another is Daniel Geale, who held a belt for two years until his close, thrilling battle with Barker in 2013. Both Murray and Geale would likely be looking at Golovkin despite the potential danger. Geale was scheduled to fight Matthew Macklin on May 24.

THE FUTURE

So much is unknown. Is Martinez healthy enough to reign much longer? Will Golovkin fulfill the hype of the heir apparent? And when will the titleholders stop feasting on the lower tiers of challengers such as Andy Lee, and begin to face each other? Beyond the titleholders, it would be interesting to see some of the also-rans meet current contenders or pair off against each other, with names including Lee, Sergio Mora, Hassan N'Dam N'Jikam, Marco Antonio Rubio, Sam Soliman and Curtis Stevens. Meanwhile, keep an eye on whether Daniel Jacobs and Matt Korobov will finally graduate from prospect status. And let's continue to monitor the progress of Ryota Murata, Patrick Nielsen and Billy Joe Saunders. ★

Yes, Floyd Mayweather Jr. is THE RING champion and still holds a pair of world titles. But his jaunts to 154 are based on business opportunities, and so his name doesn't loom heavily over the junior middleweight State of the Game. And now that the extravaganza that was Mayweather vs. Canelo Alvarez is behind us, we can finally focus on figuring out just who the best boxers are in a division where many of the titleholders and contenders have yet to face each other.

THE STARS

Miguel Cotto's role here is uncertain, what with his coming challenge of middleweight champ Sergio Martinez. That leaves Alvarez as by far the biggest name even though his loss to Mayweather left him without his title belts. He returned to pay per view in March, this time as the clear A-side, dominating Alfredo Angulo and coming out largely unscathed. That bodes well for him; the various titleholders should be lining up for a chance at a payday, and Alvarez's team will be able to pick among what they feel are the most winnable and sellable bouts.

They've courageously picked Erislandy Lara, a boxer who is talented but not always an entertaining boxer and who has been waiting for Canelo for years. They fight on July 12 in Las Vegas. Lara topped Angulo in a thriller and Austin Trout in a snoozer last year. Lara had been scheduled to face former titleholder Ishe Smith this May but wisely pulled out once the Canelo opportunity arose. Demetrius Andrade recently picked up his belt with a decision over Vanes Martirosyan and is scheduled to meet unproven mandatory challenger Brian Rose on June 14. And then there's Carlos Molina, who was supposed to defend his belt against Jermall Charlo in March only to be arrested on warrants and held for allegedly being in the United States illegally.

BEST PUNCHER
JAMES KIRKLAND

BEST BOXER:
FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.

MOST PROTECTED:
BRIAN ROSE

IS HE STILL AROUND?
YURI FOREMAN

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM:
CANELO ALVAREZ VS. JAMES KIRKLAND

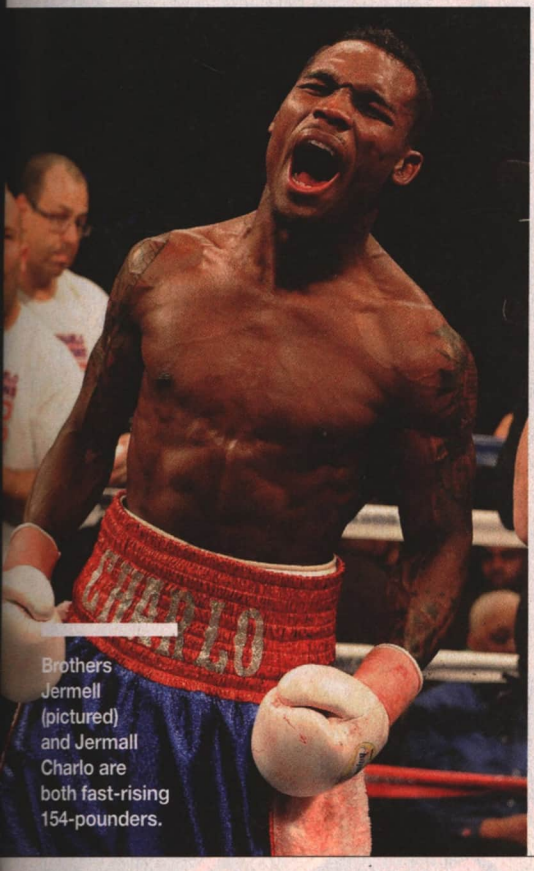
DESERVES A TITLE SHOT:
JERMELL CHARLO

MOST FUN TO WATCH:
JAMES KIRKLAND

ON THE WAY UP:
JERMALL CHARLO

ON THE WAY DOWN:
ALFREDO ANGULO

BEST FIGHT OF 2013:
ERISLANDY LARA TKO 10 ALFREDO ANGULO



Brothers Jermell (pictured) and Jermall Charlo are both fast-rising 154-pounders.

THE DEPTH

James Kirkland remains a player at 154, though a less visible one with fewer options thanks to his parting with Golden Boy and signing with rapper/promoter 50 Cent. Kirkland returned from a long layoff with a December destruction of Glen Tapia on HBO, and his next bout hasn't been set. The Charlo twins are on the verge of title shots; Jermall was supposed to have one against Molina, while Jermell is coming off a good victory over Gabriel Rosado.

Martirosyan lost to Andrade and is now seeking to navigate his way back into contention. Also rebuilding is Trout, who had a bad 2013 with losses to Alvarez and Lara. There are a pair of elders who briefly held top spots when the division's depth was thinner: Smith was scheduled to fight Ryan Davis on May 2, and the man he beat for a belt, Cornelius Bundrage, wants one more crack at a title. Anthony Mundine, the Australian former rugby player who previously contended at 168 and 160, suffered a major setback in his push to be considered among the major players at 154, getting knocked down five times by Joshua Clottey and losing a decision in April.

THE FUTURE

Though Brian Rose will challenge Demetrius Andrade for a world title, those who saw Rose struggle against Javier Maciel last year doubt his chances. Other prospects are working their way up, including Jack Culcay, Tony Harrison, Damian Jonak, Willie Nelson, Chris Pearson, Sergey Rabchenko and Julian Williams. ★

Floyd Mayweather Jr. has long been fond of saying that all roads lead to him. Fortunately that hasn't meant a traffic jam in the welterweight division. It isn't one of those cases where fighters refuse to face each other while hoping for the biggest opportunity and payday of their careers, which is a good thing, considering the pool of talent at 147. There are plenty of intriguing matches that can be made between the various titleholders, contenders and prospects. And that depth helps ease the pain of us not being able to see boxers with Top Rank, including Tim Bradley, Juan Manuel Marquez

Floyd Mayweather Jr. has never been involved in a close fight at 147 pounds.

and Manny Pacquiao, take on those within the sizable stable of promotional rival Golden Boy.

THE STARS

Pacquiao, who lost a controversial decision to Bradley and a highlight-reel knockout to Marquez in 2012, returned last year with a decision over Brandon Rios. If that win served to keep his career alive, then his next victory showed that Pacquiao still belonged toward the top of the pound-for-pound list. Pacquiao topped Bradley in their April rematch, winning a unanimous decision without dispute over a very good opponent. The loss doesn't hurt Bradley badly, but it also doesn't bring him the benefits that winning would've. He should be back in another big fight sooner rather than later.

Mayweather, whose 2013 brought wins over Robert Guerrero at 147 and Canelo Alvarez at 152, had a May 3 date with Marcos Maidana, who was fresh off a big win over Adrien Broner. It is the third fight in his six-bout deal with Showtime, which means Mayweather's career could come to a close at the end of 2015. Marquez was scheduled to face former 140-pound titleholder Mike Alvarado on May 17. The winner of Marquez-Alvarado could end up getting Pacquiao in his next bout.

THE DEPTH

Then there are a handful of others who have belts or used to have them. Shawn Porter had his best performance yet with an utter demolition of Paulie Malignaggi in April. Devon Alexander (who lost to Porter) and Robert Guerrero (who lost to Mayweather) have not yet returned from their defeats. Keith Thurman continues to entertain, is coming off an enjoyable stoppage of Jesus Soto-Karass and was scheduled to face Julio Diaz on April 26. Luis Collazo announced that he was back with a one-punch win over Victor Ortiz in January. He was to meet Amir Khan on the Mayweather-Maidana undercard, with the winner potentially in position to meet Mayweather. Other junior welterweights could soon join Khan in moving to 147, as Danny Garcia and Lamont Peterson might enter the ranks in the not-too-distant future.

BEST PUNCHER
KEITH THURMAN

BEST BOXER:
FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.

MOST PROTECTED:
LEONARD BUNDU

IS HE STILL AROUND?
VIVIAN HARRIS

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. VS. MANNY PACQUIAO

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT: KEITH THURMAN

MOST FUN TO WATCH:
MANNY PACQUIAO

ON THE WAY UP:
FRANKIE GAVIN

ON THE WAY DOWN:
VICTOR ORTIZ

BEST FIGHT OF 2013:
TIM BRADLEY UD 12 RUSLAN PROVODNIKOV

THE FUTURE

British contender Kell Brook is on the verge of a title shot as he is the mandatory challenger for Porter's belt. Other prospects are still in the development process and have yet to establish themselves as full-fledged contenders, including Olympians Frankie Gavin and Errol Spence, as well as Roman Belaev, Jose Benavidez, Eddie Gomez, Konstantin Ponomarev, Brad Solomon, Chris van Heerden and Mikael Zewski. ★

LONGEST REIGNING TITLEHOLDERS

The list below showcases the game's 10 most established titleholders (RING, WBA, WBC, IBF or WBO). A few of last year's names are gone: Chris John, Vitali Klitschko and Moruti Mthalane. Reigns are through April 20, 2014 and do not include interim titles or "regular" titles in a division with a "super" titleholder (For example, Gennady Golovkin won the WBA's "regular" title in 2010, but there was a "super" titleholder into 2012).

WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
RING, IBF, WBA, WBO HEAVYWEIGHT
96 MONTHS

ANSELMO MORENO
WBA BANTAMWEIGHT
71 MONTHS

MARCO HUCK
WBO CRUISERWEIGHT
56 MONTHS

ANDRE WARD
RING, WBA SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT
53 MONTHS

TAKASHI UCHIYAMA
WBA JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT
51 MONTHS

SERGIO MARTINEZ
RING MIDDLEWEIGHT
48 MONTHS

KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK
WBC CRUISERWEIGHT
47 MONTHS

OMAR NARVAEZ
WBO JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT
47 MONTHS

MIGUEL VAZQUEZ
IBF LIGHTWEIGHT
44 MONTHS

YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ
IBF CRUISERWEIGHT
31 MONTHS

RING champion Danny Garcia leads a still-strong 140-pound division.

For years, the junior welterweight division has gone from being packed full of talent to then losing many of those names to the allure of major paydays that tend to be available up at 147. That's no different now, given that welterweight offers the possibility of Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao (and the certainty of seven fewer pounds to lose). Among the names that made the jump in recent years are Devon Alexander, Tim Bradley, Marcos Maidana, Paulie Malignaggi and Victor Ortiz. Amir Khan is doing the same, and Danny Garcia and Lamont Peterson have spoken of moving up eventually as well. Fortunately, their migration hasn't left the 140-pound division barren.

THE STARS

Garcia remains THE RING champ, though the high point that was his September win over Lucas Matthysse was followed with a narrow escape against Mauricio Herrera this past March. The power-punching Matthysse still belongs in the picture; he was expected to return this spring against John Molina. Also around is Lamont Peterson, who still has a world title thanks to last year's loss to Matthysse coming at a 141-pound catchweight. Peterson topped Dierry Jean in January. And then there is Ruslan Provodnikov, who had a fantastic 2013 despite going 1-1. His one loss was at welterweight to Bradley in the Fight of the Year, and then he moved down to 140 and stopped Mike Alvarado. He faces Chris Algieri on June 14.

BEST PUNCHER
LUCAS MATTHYSSE

BEST BOXER:
DANNY GARCIA

MOST PROTECTED:
CESAR CUENCA

IS HE STILL AROUND?
PAUL SPADAFORA

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM:
RUSLAN PROVODNIKOV VS. LUCAS MATTHYSSE

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT:
LUCAS MATTHYSSE

MOST FUN TO WATCH:
RUSLAN PROVODNIKOV

ON THE WAY UP:
ANTONIO OROZCO

ON THE WAY DOWN:
OLUSEGUN AJOSE

BEST FIGHT OF 2013:
MIKE ALVARADO UD 12 BRANDON RIOS

THE DEPTH

Adrien Broner evidently saw his loss to Marcos Maidana as a sign that he should drop down from 147; he was scheduled to face the smaller of the two unrelated Carlos Molinas at 140 on May 3. Conversely, Brandon Rios was among the potential opponents initially mentioned for Provodnikov, but Rios may not be able to make the weight anymore. Zab Judah is also still around, though his good performance in defeat against Garcia last year only led into a poor showing against Paulie Malignaggi in December. Those were the rest of the big names. Several other fighters are hoping to join them.

THE FUTURE

Thomas Dulorme defeated Karim Mayfield in March to get one step closer to a title shot. Jessie Vargas took a nice step by outpointing Khabib Allakhverdiev in April, although the decision was controversial. Other contenders include Cesar Cuenca, Herrera, Johan Perez and Viktor Postol. Selcuk Aydin has moved down to 140 from welterweight and was scheduled to fight Postol on May 17, while former lightweights Antonio DeMarco, Henry Lundy and John Molina have moved up. And then there are a handful of developing prospects, including Algieri, Frankie Gomez, Amir Imam, Antonio Orozco and Jose Zepeda. ★

This is the division that brought us Diego Corrales vs. Jose Luis Castillo back in 2005, Juan Manuel Marquez vs. Juan Diaz in 2009 and, more recently, last year's epic battle between Omar Figueroa and Nihito Arakawa, plus the dramatic comeback John Molina had in stopping Mickey Bey. Nevertheless, right now there isn't much to be excited about. For one, there isn't much star power at lightweight. Beyond that, there are multiple guys who are the complete antithesis of those who took part in the fan-friendly fights mentioned above. And even though there are several recognizable names at 135, many of them have shown themselves to be a level or two below being considered top talents.

BEST PUNCHER
SERGIO THOMPSON

BEST BOXER:
TERENCE CRAWFORD

MOST PROTECTED:
JUAN DIAZ

IS HE STILL AROUND?
PAULUS MOSES

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM:
OMAR FIGUEROA VS. JORGE LINARES

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT:
RAY BELTRAN

MOST FUN TO WATCH:
OMAR FIGUEROA

ON THE WAY UP:
GHISLAIN MADUMA

ON THE WAY DOWN:
RICKY BURNS

BEST FIGHT OF 2013:
OMAR FIGUEROA UD 12 NIHITO ARAKAWA

THE STARS

One bright spot is Terence Crawford, who burst onto the scene last year with a win at 140 over Breidis Prescott on HBO, then appeared on the network twice more. That earned him a title shot, which he won in March, defeating the biggest ticker seller that the division had: Scotland's Ricky Burns, who had been fortunate to hold onto his belt in his previous two defenses. Crawford can't be considered a star just yet. Neither can Figueroa, though his war with Arakawa was a good place to begin. Figueroa was scheduled to return on April 26 in a title defense against Jerry Belmontes. Yuriorkis Gamboa also calls 135 home, but he's rarely seen these days. He beat Darleys Perez in June 2013 and hasn't fought again since.

THE DEPTH

There are two other titleholders, though one hesitates to list them as stars. Miguel Vazquez has made six successful defenses since 2010, including a February decision against previously unbeaten Denis Shafikov. But while he keeps winning, he isn't winning over fans or network executives. The same can be said for Richar Abril, who was arguably robbed against Brandon Rios back in 2012. Abril picked up a belt last year with a win over Sharif Bogere, but he hasn't returned since.

Far more entertaining is Ray Beltran, who might have deserved to win against Burns last year but left only with a draw. He defeated late replacement opponent Arash Usmanee in April. Jorge Linares could be back in the title picture following his title-elimination victory in March over Arakawa. A man who stopped Linares two years ago, Sergio Thompson, scored a victory over Ricardo Alvarez on the same card. Finally, former titleholder Juan Diaz has fought four times since his comeback began last year, but he hasn't faced high-quality opposition yet.

THE FUTURE

Junior lightweight titleholder Mikey Garcia had been considering a move to 135 to face Gamboa, but negotiations for that fight fizzled. Let's talk then about others who actually do call lightweight home. Anthony Peterson returned in March, and his inactivity may be a thing of the past now that he's healthy, and particularly now that he has signed with adviser Al Haymon. Other prospects in this division include the undefeated Karl Dargan, Robert Easter, Ghislain Maduma, Ivan Redkach and Felix Verdejo, plus one- and two-loss guys Bey, Bogere, Daniel Estrada and Shafikov. ★

Terence Crawford (right) became a major player by taking Ricky Burns' WBO title.

WBO titleholder Mikey Garcia (left) is in need of a high-profile opponent.

This wonderfully global sport has become more accessible to fans because the internet allows us to watch fights featuring, say, two enjoyable 130-pound titleholders from Japan. But one unfortunate thing about this global sport is that those two Japanese titleholders and a very good American junior lightweight have had little cause to cross the Pacific in either direction to meet each other. That's a shame, because Takashi Miura and Takashi Uchiyama — who fought each other in 2011, with Uchiyama winning — are entertaining fighters who deserve a wider audience. And it would be great to see how fellow titleholder Mikey Garcia would fare against them, and vice versa. The good news? Desperate times call for desperate measures, and Garcia needs an opponent.

THE STARS

Uchiyama has held his title for four years and has scored six stoppages in his eight defenses. He tastes the canvas himself on occasion but has yet to remain there. Miura is one of the opponents who put him there.

BEST PUNCHER
TAKASHI UCHIYAMA

BEST BOXER:
MIKEY GARCIA

MOST PROTECTED:
ROMAIN JACOB

IS HE STILL AROUND?
MALCOLM KLASSEN

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM: MIKEY GARCIA VS. TAKASHI UCHIYAMA

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT:
RANCES BARTHELEMY

MOST FUN TO WATCH:
TAKASHI MIURA

ON THE WAY UP:
JOSE PEDRAZA

ON THE WAY DOWN:
DANIEL PONCE DE LEON

BEST FIGHT OF 2013:
TAKASHI MIURA UD 12 SERGIO THOMPSON

Since losing to Uchiyama, Miura went on to capture a belt last year, defended it with an entertaining and brutal bout against Sergio Thompson in which both men went down, and then fought once more on the final day of the year on a card that also featured Uchiyama. Neither has fought so far in 2014. Garcia, meanwhile, has quickly run out of network-acceptable opponents during his brief stint at 130. He won his belt with a knockout of Roman Martinez in November, then outpointed Juan Carlos Burgos in January. A potential move to 135 to face Yuriorkis Gamboa never got past the negotiation process. Now Garcia has filed a lawsuit against Top Rank, which may lead to him being sidelined.

THE DEPTH

Rances Barthelemy looks promising, though his second-round obliteration of titleholder Argenis Mendez was rightly overturned because the knockout blows came after the bell. A rematch should come in June. Orlando Salido is on his way up to 130 after coming in overweight for his March bout with Vasyl Lomachenko. Juan Manuel Lopez bought himself at least one more appearance as the B-side after a second-round knockout in his rematch with Daniel Ponce De Leon in March.

THE FUTURE

Javier Fortuna was scheduled to face Juan Antonio Rodriguez at the end of May. Bryan Vasquez beat Jose Felix on the Pacquiao-Bradley II undercard in April. Will Tomlinson is looking to bounce back from his March loss to Jerry Belmontes. Ditto for Diego Magdaleno, who came up short against Roman Martinez last year. And then there are up-and-comers Jomthong Chuwatana, Joel Diaz Jr., Adrian Estrella, Romain Jacob, Rikki Naito, Jose Pedraza, Francisco Vargas and Liam Walsh. ★

The 126-pound division went through a serious shakeup in 2013. Longtime titleholder Chris John suffered his first pro defeat, a knockout against Simpiwe Vetyeka, and subsequently retired. RING champion Mikey Garcia failed to make weight for his win over Juan Manuel Lopez and has since departed to the junior lightweight division. Abner Mares was shockingly defeated by Jhonny Gonzalez by a first-round technical knockout. And Nonito Donaire, who moved up to featherweight after his loss to Guillermo Rigondeaux at 122, didn't look so hot in his rematch with Vic Darchinyan before ultimately getting the TKO win.

THE STARS

Donaire and Vetyeka were scheduled to face one another on May 31. Gonzalez and Mares were initially supposed to have an immediate rematch, but Mares got hurt in training camp and both likely will now return against other foes before meeting again. Evgeny Gradovich surged into the picture last year with a close win over titleholder Billy Dib, then defended his belt with a pair of victories in Macau, including a dominant victory over Dib in their rematch. He could end up benefiting from Bob Arum's desire to promote in Russia.

THE DEPTH

Gary Russell Jr. and Vasyl Lomachenko have agreed to fight on June 21 for the WBO title vacated by Salido, a compelling matchup of gifted young fighters that will bring attention to the division. This will be Russell's first significant test. Lomachenko, a two-time Olympic gold medalist, jumped nearly straight into the fire not long after he turned pro by challenging veteran titleholder Salido, who was overweight on the scales and dirty in the ring. Lomachenko nevertheless looked competitive in defeat.

BEST PUNCHER
JHONNY GONZALEZ

BEST BOXER:
NONITO DONAIRE

MOST PROTECTED:
GARY RUSSELL JR.

IS HE STILL AROUND?
CELESTINO CABALLERO

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM:
NONITO DONAIRE VS. ABNER MARES

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT:
NICHOLAS WALTERS

MOST FUN TO WATCH:
JHONNY GONZALEZ

ON THE WAY UP:
VASYL LOMACHENKO

ON THE WAY DOWN:
BILLY DIB

BEST FIGHT OF 2013:
SIMPIWE VETYEKA TKO 12 DAUD YORDAN

Other recent featherweights seem to be changing divisions: Javier Fortuna, Daniel Ponce De Leon and Ronny Rios have moved up, while Hozumi Hasegawa dropped down for a title shot at 122.

THE FUTURE

Russell and Lomachenko are the biggest names, but there are others worth mentioning: Nicholas Walters and Joel Brunker remain unbeaten, Lee Selby continues to win in the United Kingdom, and Marvin Sonsona surprised many with his beautiful uppercut knockout of former beltholder Akifumi Shimoda. On the fringe are Jayson Velez and Rene Alvarado. Velez suffered an injury that canceled a title shot against Ponce De Leon last year, and that may have been a blessing in disguise, as his return win over Dat Nguyen last October, while entertaining, didn't leave anyone convinced that Velez belongs yet in the title picture. And keep an eye out for Oscar Valdez. ★

Nonito Donaire was scheduled to challenge for Simpiwe Vetyeka's WBA title on May 31.

Is Guillermo Rigondeaux too good for his own good?

Every once in a while, a division will have a true champion who has fallen out of favor. This is true for Guillermo Rigondeaux, a two-time Olympic gold medalist and phenomenal talent who rose to the top of 122 last year with his win over Nonito Donaire. The fact that he appears to be an exceptional boxer is to his benefit and his detriment. He can be as unhittable as he wants to be, and that can make him unwatchable. HBO isn't overly interested in spotlighting him anymore. His promoter, Bob Arum of Top Rank, doesn't hesitate to criticize him publicly. Rigondeaux, then, is very high risk with very little reward. As a result, the division is being driven by the goings-on of a handful of other titleholders and contenders.

THE STARS

Rigondeaux's December win over the too-hesitant Joseph Agbeko left a poor taste in people's mouths, even if the boredom wasn't wholly his fault. His first appearance of 2014 had not yet been set. Meanwhile, Leo Santa Cruz topped Cristian Mijares in March for his second successful title defense. He may soon end up in an interesting collision with contender Carl Frampton, who made quick work of former 108- and 115-pound titleholder Hugo Cazares in April. Frampton scored a stoppage last year over Kiko Martinez, who went on to plow through titleholder Jhonatan Romero later that year. Martinez won his second defense in April against former 118- and 126-pound titleholder Hozumi Hasegawa. Also, undefeated contender Scott Quigg needed just two rounds to take out Tshifhiwa Munyai in April, the Englishman's second consecutive second-round knockout.

BEST PUNCHER
KIKO MARTINEZ

BEST BOXER:
GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX

MOST PROTECTED:
ANDRES GUTIERREZ

IS HE STILL AROUND?
ALEXANDER MUNOZ

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX VS. LEO SANTA CRUZ

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT: CARL FRAMPTON

MOST FUN TO WATCH:
LEO SANTA CRUZ

ON THE WAY UP:
JESSIE MAGDALENO

ON THE WAY DOWN:
VICTOR TERRAZAS

BEST FIGHT OF 2013:
CARL FRAMPTON TKO 9 KIKO MARTINEZ

THE DEPTH

From there, we get to the loser's bracket, which is made up of recognizable veterans coming off of defeats. Mijares has dropped a pair to Victor Terrazas and Santa Cruz. Terrazas lost in the third round to Santa Cruz last year. Jeffrey Mathebula has a pair of losses to Nonito Donaire and, more recently, Martinez. Then there are Fernando Montiel and Vic Darchinyan, who recently fought at higher weights, and Chris Avalos, who has two losses but has been working his way back into contention.

THE FUTURE

One big question is where Rigondeaux will go if he and Top Rank end up parting ways, and whether that could mean better things for him. As for those older names that are on the way down, they may end up being supplanted by any of a number of undefeated prospects. Among these up-and-comers are Kid Galahad, Andres Gutierrez, Jessie Magdaleno, Roman Morales, Yoandris Salinas, Genesis Servania and Rey Vargas. ★

BANTAMWEIGHT

For a brief time, there was a great amount of attention brought to the bantamweight division thanks to Nonito Donaire and also the Showtime tournament involving Joseph Agbeko, Vic Darchinyan, Abner Mares and Yonnhy Perez. Leo Santa Cruz also first caught notice while competing at 118. But even though all of the above have since moved on, there remains a ridiculously deep pool of international talent that is deserving of attention even if that attention isn't going to come from the mainstream boxing fans in the United States. There are power-punchers and skilled boxers, plus big stars, veteran contenders and promising prospects.

THE STARS

Japan has a pair of titleholders at 118 in Shinsuke Yamanaka and Tomoki Kameda. Yamanaka, who was scheduled to return on April 23, won his belt in 2011 and has defended it in five victories since, with only Darchinyan lasting the distance against him.

Kameda, one of three fighting brothers, picked up his title last year with a decision over Paulus Ambunda, then outpointed Immanuel Naidjala in December.

The dean of the division, though, is Anselmo Moreno, whose title reign has lasted nearly six years and through 12 successful defenses. The skilled boxer's only loss came in 2012, when he jumped to 122 and challenged Mares. A proposed bout against Koki Kameda won't happen; Koki is moving down to 115.

THE DEPTH

Stuart Hall holds the fourth sanctioning body belt, one that was stripped from Jamie McDonnell last year.

BEST PUNCHER
SHINSUKE YAMANAKA

BEST BOXER:
ANSELMO MORENO

MOST PROTECTED:
DIEGO RICARDO SANTILLAN

IS HE STILL AROUND?
TOMAS ROJAS

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM:
SHINSUKE YAMANAKA VS. ANSELMO MORENO

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT:
JAMIE MCDONNELL

MOST FUN TO WATCH:
SHINSUKE YAMANAKA

ON THE WAY UP:
RANDY CABALLERO

ON THE WAY DOWN:
CHRISTIAN ESQUIVEL

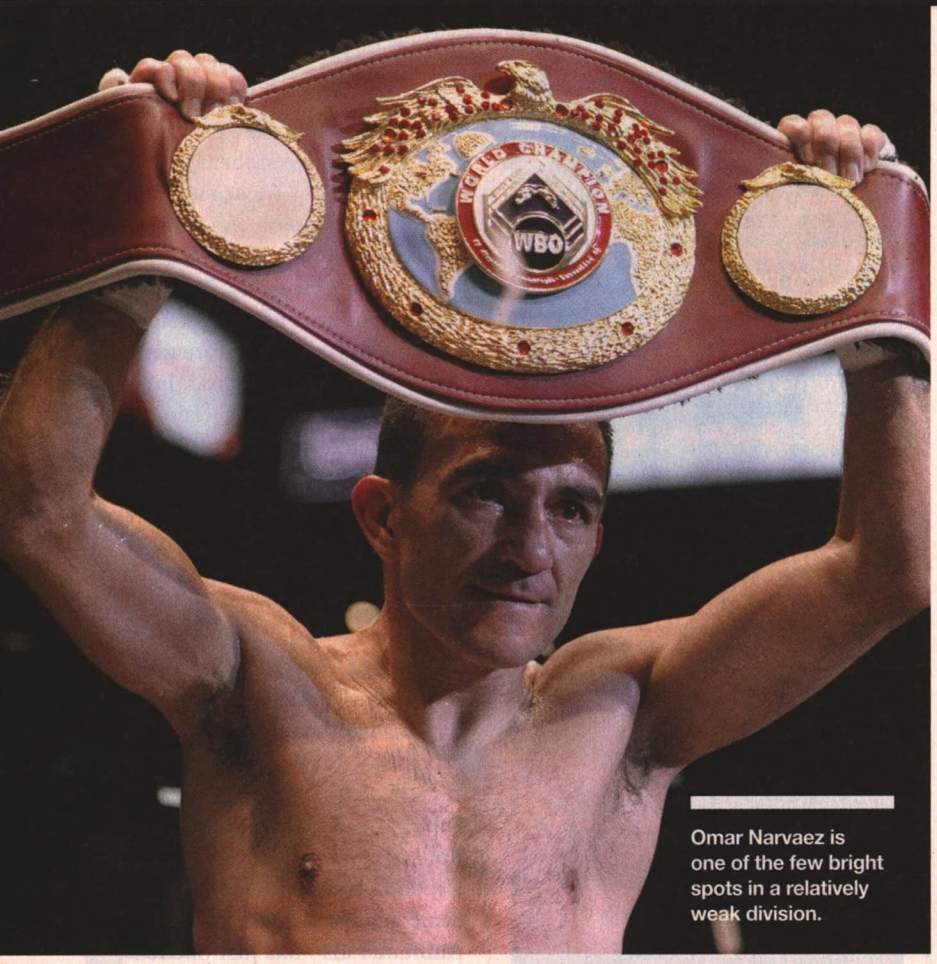
BEST FIGHT OF 2013:
JAMIE MCDONNELL MD 12 JULIO CEJA

McDonnell topped Hall back in 2011 when both were prospects. A rematch between them would be fitting. Malcolm Tunacao, who was flyweight champion way back in 2000, is now 36 years old, ancient for the lighter weights. Nevertheless, he put up a good fight against Yamanaka last year before getting stopped in the final round. Julio Ceja dropped a close decision to McDonnell last year but still belongs in the picture. And Liborio Solis seems a likely entry into the mix at 118 given that he was overweight for his win over the third Kameda, junior bantamweight Daiki.

THE FUTURE

But wait — there's more! Among the unbeaten bantamweight prospects are Paul Butler, Randy Caballero, Juan Carlos Payano, Diego Ricardo Santillan and Rau'shee Warren. Then there's Ryosuke Iwasa, whose sole defeat came against Yamanaka in 2011. Ambunda also has just one loss, against Tomoki Kameda last year. ★

Anselmo Moreno has been a dominating figure in the division for almost six years.



Omar Narvaez is one of the few bright spots in a relatively weak division.

Only three pounds separates the junior bantamweight division from the flyweights, but you won't hear anywhere near the kind of excitement when people discuss the 115-pound weight class as you do when they rave about 112. There's just nowhere near the depth or star power at junior bantamweight, where one fighter has reigned for years and where the other top names rarely stay there for long.

THE STARS

The one constant at 115 is Omar Narvaez, who was a longtime titleholder at flyweight before moving up and capturing a belt in this division in 2010. He has defended it successfully nine times, and the only loss in his entire career came when he moved up to bantamweight to challenge Nonito Donaire in 2011. Narvaez is a very good boxer, but he hasn't faced other notable contenders of late. Srisaket Sor Rungvisai earned his belt by stopping Yota Sato last year, defended it against Hirofumi Mukai and is scheduled to meet mandatory challenger Carlos Cuadras on May 31 in a battle between two men with high knockout percentages. And Kohei Kono just became the division's other titleholder with a March knockout of Denkaosan Kaovichit.

THE DEPTH

Zolani Tete knocked out Juan Carlos Sanchez Jr. last November and is in line for a shot at a vacant title. That title previously belonged to Daiki Kameda, one of three fighting brothers, but he decided to drop the belt earlier this year. He could've unified it last year in a bout with Liborio Solis, except the overweight Solis wound up winning that bout by split decision. We'll see whether the winner of a May 24 fight between David Sanchez and Breilor Teran fits into the picture. And then there are a few fighters coming off losses: Kaovichit, who is now 37; Felipe Orucuta, who dropped a split decision to Narvaez last year; and Sanchez, who may want to consider jumping up to bantamweight.

THE FUTURE

Narvaez turns 39 this July, pretty old for any boxer but ancient for these smaller weight classes. Despite that, there hasn't been any indication that he's about to hang up his gloves. Meanwhile, there's always the possibility of lighter fighters moving up to 115 to give them an additional three pounds of relief. And prospects from within the junior bantamweight ranks include Sho Ishida, Teiru Kinoshita, Ivan Morales, Rex Tso and Arthur Villanueva. ★

BEST PUNCHER
SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI

BEST BOXER:
OMAR NARVAEZ

MOST PROTECTED:
ARTHUR VILLANUEVA

IS HE STILL AROUND?
WANDEE SINGWANCHA

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM:
KOHEI KONO VS. KOKI KAMEDA

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT:
ZOLANI TETE

MOST FUN TO WATCH:
SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI

ON THE WAY UP:
IVAN MORALES

ON THE WAY DOWN:
HIROYUKI HISATAKA

BEST FIGHT OF 2013:
ZOLANI TETE KO 10 JUAN CARLOS SANCHEZ JR.

You know you have a great division when you can take nearly any two fighters from the Top 10, match them up and have an interesting pairing. The flyweight division makes us hardcore fans into the proverbial kid in the candy store, and it somehow continues to get even better as more names move to 112. Let's not waste any more space and instead move right to it.

THE STARS

Akira Yaegashi has been the RING champion for a year now, topping Toshiyuki Igarashi, who beat Sonny Boy Jaro, who shocked Pongsaklek Wonjongkam. Yaegashi, a former titleholder at 105, has made three successful defenses of his belt here at 112. Juan Francisco Estrada is just 24 years old but has two world titles, which he won by edging Brian Viloria last year. He was scheduled to make his second defense, against Richie Mepranum, on April 26. Estrada's last loss came at 108 against Roman Gonzalez, an undefeated cult favorite power-puncher who has recently come to flyweight in the hope of capturing a belt in his third weight class. And then there's Kazuto Ioka, who beat Yaegashi in a wonderful brawl at 105, moved up to 108 and is now coming to 112. He was scheduled on May 7 to challenge titleholder Amnat Ruenroeng, who topped Rocky Fuentes earlier this year.

THE DEPTH

Giovani Segura bounced back from losses to Brian Viloria and Edgar Sosa by winning the division's best fight of 2013, stopping Hernan Marquez in the final round. He's aiming for a shot at Estrada, which is almost guaranteed to be a war. Elsewhere in the Top 10 are Igarashi, who hasn't fought since September; Viloria, once again rebuilding and expected to have his second post-Estrada bout this July; Edgar Sosa, who hasn't been back since losing to Yaegashi in December; Juan Carlos Reveco, whose lone loss came in 2007 against Brahim Asloum; former titleholder Moruti Mthalane, who lost to Nonito Donaire in 2008, regained a belt later on, and who just came back this March from an 18-month layoff; and Milan Melindo lost to Estrada last year but shows promise.

Even outside the top 10, there's Luis Concepcion, who hasn't lost since his first-round defeat to Marquez in 2011, which was a rematch of their battle from earlier that year. As for Marquez, he had a bout scheduled for April 26 above the flyweight division. And then there's Roberto Domingo Sosa, who came to 112 after losing a title bout at 115 last year.

BEST PUNCHER
ROMAN GONZALEZ

BEST BOXER:
AKIRA YAEGASHI

MOST PROTECTED:
JUAN CARLOS REVECO

IS HE STILL AROUND?
CARLOS TAMARA

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM:
ROMAN GONZALEZ VS. KAZUTO IOKA

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT:
ROMAN GONZALEZ

MOST FUN TO WATCH:
JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA

ON THE WAY UP:
MILAN MELINDO

ON THE WAY DOWN:
KOMPAYAK PORPRAMOOK

BEST FIGHT OF 2013:
GIOVANI SEGURA TKO 10 HERNAN MARQUEZ

THE FUTURE

It's not like you need more, but here are a few other flyweight prospects: Oleksandr Hryshchuk, Kevin Satchel and Froilan Saludar. They're not the most likely names to be the future of the 112-pound division, though, and there are better candidates who might eventually rise up from the lighter ranks. ★

Roman Gonzalez (left) brings added star power to a very strong division.

Naoya Inoue made a huge impression by taking Adrian Hernandez's title in his sixth fight.

The big names come and the big names go. Among the list of former 108-pounders now at 112 are Roman Gonzalez, Kazuto Ioka, Juan Francisco Estrada, Giovani Segura, Edgar Sosa and Brian Viloria. Akira Yaegashi skipped the division completely, moving from strawweight to flyweight. But these migrations haven't left the junior flyweight a barren and desolate division. There are still a few familiar names at 108, plus a pair of brothers who are quickly making themselves known.

THE STARS

Donnie Nietes and Moises Fuentes fought to a draw in March 2013. Fuentes is Nietes' mandatory challenger, and their rematch is our selection for matchmaker's dream. Fortunately we were scheduled to get that sequel on May 10, with THE RING 108-pound championship expected to be at stake. Also, on May 3, titleholder Johnriel Casimero was set to face Mauricio Fuentes, who is of no relation to Moises. Casimero is coming off a pair of successful title defenses in 2013 and is the same fighter who beat Luis Lazarte in Argentina and then survived a violent post-fight riot. Meanwhile, look out for Naoya Inoue, who stopped Adrian Hernandez in April, winning a world title in what was just his sixth pro fight.

THE DEPTH

Hernandez's loss to Inoue brought to an end his second title reign at 108. Pedro Guevara has won three in a row since dropping a split decision to Casimero back in 2012, with one of those victories coming against former 105-pound titleholder Mario Rodriguez. Any thought that former strawweight titleholder Nkosinathi Joyi would also contend at 108 might be out the window after Joyi's stunning knockout loss against the unheralded Rey Loreto earlier this year. Rising former 105-pound titleholder Ryo Miyazaki was also felled in three, his defeat coming against Fahlan Sakkreerin Jr. in December.

That same night, prospect Felix Alvarado suffered his first pro defeat, though that decision loss came against a top opponent in Ioka.

THE FUTURE

The aforementioned Sakkreerin went on to lose his next bout, an over-the-limit contest against Naoya Inoue's younger brother, 18-year-old Takuma, who took an eight-round decision. He was 2-0 as of this writing, as is his countryman Kosei Tanaka. Among others with more pro experience are Paipharob Kokietgym, who is 23-0, and the 32-8 Alberto Rossel, whose losses came years ago to familiar names such as Ivan Calderon, Hugo Cazares, Lazarte, Vusi Malinga and Viloria. Rossel has fought in several weight classes but has held an interim title at 108 for nearly two years now and has not yet stepped up against the best of what his division has to offer. ★

BEST PUNCHER
JOHNRIEL CASIMERO

BEST BOXER:
MOISES FUENTES

MOST PROTECTED:
ALBERTO ROSSEL

IS HE STILL AROUND?
MUHAMMAD RACHMAN

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM:
DONNIE NIETES-MOISES FUENTES II

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT:
PEDRO GUEVARA

MOST FUN TO WATCH:
ADRIAN HERNANDEZ

ON THE WAY UP:
NAOYA INOUE

ON THE WAY DOWN:
NKOSINATHI JOYI

BEST FIGHT OF 2013:
DONNIE NIETES D 12 MOISES FUENTES

Years ago, perhaps the only strawweight that all but the most hardcore of fight fans could name was Ivan Calderon, a very small but very skilled boxer. Since then, we've gotten the power-punching of Roman Gonzalez and entertaining action involving Akira Yaegashi, Kazuto Ioka and a handful of others. There still aren't as many eyes regularly on the 105-pound weight class as there are on the major divisions, but there are competitive bouts to be made that are worth watching, and that makes this a division worth following.

THE STARS

This is a division in flux where the top names regularly change. None of the current titleholders had their belts in 2012. Katsunari Takayama won his in March 2013 when he outpointed Mario Rodriguez, who had just knocked out Nkosinathi Joyi, whom Takayama lost to back in 2012. Hekkie Budler won a vacant title this past March, and his sole defeat came in a split decision three years ago up at 108. Oswaldo Novoa stopped Xiong Zhao Zhong in February, the biggest win by far for a fighter whose record before then was 12-4-1. And Francisco Rodriguez Jr. took it to Merlito Sabillo and took his title in March, knocking him down early and stopping him late.

THE DEPTH

Jesus Silvestre has five losses on his record, though three came against very good opponents – Donnie Nietes, Paipharob Kokietgym and then-titleholder Ryo Miyazaki – one came early, and the most recent (and most puzzling) was an eight-round split decision. Carlos Buitrago is another undefeated fighter from Nicaragua, and even his nickname, "Chocorroncito," is reminiscent of Roman "Chocolatito" Gonzalez. His lone blemish is a draw against Sabillo last year. Denver Cuello hasn't returned from an injury, which contributed to his close decision loss to Xiong last June. We'll see whether Sabillo or Xiong can regain a foothold in this division or if they decide to move up.

BEST PUNCHER
JESUS SILVESTRE

BEST BOXER:
HEKKIE BUDLER

MOST PROTECTED:
ALI RAYMI

IS HE STILL AROUND?
TAKASHI KUNISHIGE

MATCHMAKER'S DREAM:
HEKKIE BUDLER VS. CARLOS BUITRAGO

DESERVES A TITLE SHOT:
CARLOS BUITRAGO

MOST FUN TO WATCH:
CARLOS BUITRAGO

ON THE WAY UP:
RYUJI HARA

ON THE WAY DOWN:
XIONG ZHAO ZHONG

BEST FIGHT OF 2013:
MERLITO SABILLO D 12 CARLOS BUITRAGO

THE FUTURE

Ryuji Hara is 17-0 (10 KOs) and working his way up through the rankings. Wanheng Menayothin has nearly twice as many fights as Hara and the same number of knockouts as him, and it'll be interesting to see how he fares once he steps in against a fellow contender. Finally, the less said about Ali Raymi, the better. He's 20-0 with 20 KOs, all in the first round, but the consensus is that his record and reputation have been manufactured. He's 40 years old and not at all the future. ★

Xiong Zhao Zhong (right) of China is on the comeback trail after losing his title to Oswaldo Novoa.

Manny Pacquiao wasn't too old to beat Tim Bradley in their rematch on April 12.

THE ELDER STATESMAN

A SOMEWHAT DIMINISHED **MANNY PACQUIAO** RELIED ON EXPERIENCE AND MATURITY TO DOMINATE **TIM BRADLEY**

By **Norm Frauenheim**

Manny Pacquiao, celebrity minister and Filipino congressman, is a fighter who has never been comfortable in the bully pulpit. If that sounds like a puzzle, it is. Pacquiao, a politician who says little, is a collection of contrasts. His many sides look as if they don't belong together. Yet he continues to make them all fit in the ever-evolving face of a fighter who might not be as dynamic or as dangerous but remains as compelling as ever.

Pacquiao's career from street kid to gambler, from risk taker to knockout artist, from fearless to feared, brought him to an April 12 rematch against Tim Bradley which appeared to be full of peril. It looked like the jagged piece in a profile that would finally trip him up and into retirement. Over nearly two decades in the ring, he has been called countless things. But never compassionate. Compassion and boxing are one of those impossibilities. On the pound-for-pound list of the oxymoronic, you can put compassionate boxer right there alongside jumbo shrimp.

To call a fighter compassionate is code. It means he's finished. Bradley said so. Pundits suspected so. Even oddsmakers thought there was a real chance he was just a fight away from being done. Pacquiao was less than a 2-to-1 favorite, which meant there was a real chance retirement would get some serious consideration.

But it won't, because Pacquiao found another way to re-invent himself with a unanimous decision over Bradley. It wasn't everything that Pacquiao and Freddie Roach had promised. There was no knockout. There were even moments when Pacquiao looked ordinary during his eighth straight fight without a stoppage.

"Sometimes, a little sloppy," Roach said.

With a 116-112, 118-110, 116-112 victory that regained him a piece of the welterweight title that many thought was stolen in a controversial split decision for Bradley in 2012, Pacquiao became a fighter that many thought he could never be. A couple weeks after Paulie Malignaggi said during a conference call that Pacquiao was not a smart fighter, he showed plenty of smarts.

He had to against Bradley, who surprised him early with an aggressive pursuit of a knockout. The fight turned on a rocking right hand from Bradley, who lifted Pacquiao off his feet in the fourth. It was moment when it looked as if Pacquiao might wind up the way he did in December 2012, when, in the same ring at the MGM Grand's Garden Arena in Las Vegas, Juan Manuel Marquez put him face down and face-to-face with his own vulnerabilities.

As it turned out, however, Bradley's punch served as a warning that it was time to adjust rather than just launch an instinctive counterattack. A younger Pacquiao might have proceeded to overwhelm Bradley with angles, foot speed and quick hands. Then again, a younger Pacquiao also might not have been there in the way of the Marquez right that knocked him out. Younger legs, still agile and tireless, might have swiftly found an angle and carried Pacquiao out of harm's way.

But that Pacquiao is gone. And today's Pacquiao knows it.

"He hit me harder in the first fight," Bradley said. "His experience was the difference this time around."

Above all, Pacquiao's rematch victory over Bradley represents a rite of passage from very good to great. He has learned how to fight without the blinding edge of speed he possessed as a young man. He's a grown-up and fought like one. It means he can put his ambition to run for the Filipino Senate and perhaps presidency on hold for a

couple of years. Compassion was never an issue, especially against the once-beaten Bradley, who has never been stopped.

If anything, it was there before the opening bell when Pacquiao's mom, Dionisia, blessed her son in the dressing room in a scene that was included in the HBO's pay-per-view telecast. Throughout training camp, Pacquiao sang hymns in the morning before sparring. On the morning of the 12-round bout, he and his devout entourage sang "Jesus, We Enthrone You."

In the days before the fight, Bradley trainer Joel Diaz argued that Pacquiao couldn't abandon his compassionate nature, not even for 12 rounds. Diaz speculated that Pacquiao's compassion is the very reason he continues to fight. Otherwise, Diaz said, he would have retired after getting knocked out by Marquez.

"People need him to fight," Diaz said. "He's got an entourage as big as a major corporation. If he quits boxing, those people lose their paychecks."

Diaz's suggestion is that Pacquiao could never be a corporate shark. He's too compassionate to lay anybody off.

"The dude is too nice," Bradley said after the weigh-in when, during the ritual face-to-face pose, Bradley urged him to promise a knockout. "He can't even tell me he's going to knock me out."

But compassion isn't the equivalent of a glass chin. Instead of a dangerous fragility, Bradley discovered that it might have made Pacquiao stronger. As he gets older, the Filipino idol, who will be 36 in December, becomes more of a father figure. Pacquiao, whose wife, Jinkee, was in the Philippines and was expecting their fifth child during the Bradley rematch, has more to fight for than ever. That comes at a cost, and there already have been questions about Pacquiao's finances amid reports that he owes money to Filipino tax authorities and the Internal Revenue Service.

No one, not even Bradley, disputed the decision in the rematch.

Pacquiao purchased 2,200 tickets for friends and followers to attend the rematch, according to advisor Michael Koncz. That amounted to about $1 million, or 1/20th of Pacquaio's $20 million guarantee. It's not known how much he paid for rooms, food and travel. But you get the idea. Pacquiao's compassion is expensive. He has to fight. But for how much longer?

While standing in the ring after outscoring Bradley throughout most of the final six rounds, he told former HBO analyst Larry Merchant and others that he foresaw two more years, which would bring him to 2016 and a potential run for a seat in the Filipino Senate. That could mean three, maybe four more fights.

A fifth bout with Marquez appears likely if Marquez beats Mike Alvarado in June at the old Forum in Inglewood, Calif. Pacquiao sounded as if he is as eager to show that the knockout loss to Marquez was as much of an aberration as the split-decision loss to Bradley was lousy scoring. If Bradley represented some unfinished business, so does Marquez.

But the biggest bit of unfinished business involves the most tiresome subject of all. No matter what Pacquiao does or says, there is always the Floyd Mayweather Jr. question.

It wasn't addressed in the ring during the aftermath of a decision that this time generated no argument, not even from Bradley, who congratulated Pacquiao

JEFF GROSS/GETTY IMAGES

for a well-deserved victory. But after getting 32 stitches for a cut sustained above his right eye from a head butt in the bout's final moments, Pacquiao arrived at the post-midnight news conference only to hear the question all over again.

"I think about that, but I don't know if that fight will happen," Pacquiao said. "If you ask me, 100 percent I want that fight. But it depends on them. My telephone line is open 24 hours, seven days a week."

Pacquiao beat Bradley in what has become Mayweather's house. Much to the dismay of Bob Arum, Pacquiao's promoter, Mayweather's image was all over the MGM Grand during fight week. For every Pacquiao-Bradley poster, there appeared to be at least one for the May 3 Mayweather-Marcos Maidana fight.

Arum ripped the MGM at the formal news conference on Wednesday in a rant that went on for four days and didn't conclude until the post-fight news conference early on a Sunday. At the first news conference, Arum introduced Richard Sturm, President of MGM Entertainment and Sports, as the "president of putting up posters and decorations for the wrong fight."

Bradley, ever gracious, was the only one to thank the MGM.

"It's the only time I been in a hotel room with a staircase," Bradley said of his suite. "It should have an elevator."

An elevator decorated with a Mayweather-Maidana poster, of course.

During the week, MGM officials began to take down some of the Mayweather-Maidana signage. But not all of it, which prompted Arum to continue. The Top Rank promoter threatened to sue the MGM. A sure sign that he was still considering legal action was evident during the post-fight news conference when he pointed out that the crowd, announced at 15,601, was short of a sellout. It's not often that a promoter says there was no sellout. He also said it was unfair to Tecate, a Mexican beer sponsor for Pacquiao-Bradley. Corona, a Tecate rival, is a sponsor for Mayweather-Maidana.

The controversy, just the latest in the Top Rank-Golden Boy Promotions feud, was further fueled by Golden Boy scheduling a Maidana news conference at a restaurant on the MGM's casino floor about nine hours before opening bell to Pacquiao-Bradley.

Arum responded with a parting shot during what figures to be his last news conference at the MGM for a while. He also asked that fans stage a boycott of Mayweather-Maidana, a Showtime Pay Per View event.

"The only people that can make Floyd Mayweather fight Manny is the public, if they boycott that nonsense on May 3," Arum roared into a microphone. "That's what the public should do. If you (the media) want that fight, tell the public not to buy pay per view and not to buy tickets. There is no other way. We are prepared tomorrow to sit down at a table with his people, to work out the conditions for the fight."

Arum, who at 82 still loves a fight, sounds as if he wants to take his battle out onto the streets. He even used some controversial street language.

"Write all you want about fights with no-hopers and all this thuggery," Arum said. "We'll give you quality fights. HBO will give you quality fights. But you want to close your eyes to thuggery in this sport."

The thuggery reference was condemned by those who consider it a racial euphemism. But Arum wouldn't back down.

"If people operate in good faith and want to get something done, everything is possible," Arum said. "It's no reason to take threats and preconditions and say that is immutable. Everything can be negotiated, and everything should be negotiated. I don't think there's a downside for anybody about sitting down and making it happen. I really don't.

"Any excuses for it not happening is posturing and exhibits, in my mind, the same thug mentality that we saw in the MGM hanging posters for a fight that is three weeks away. I've never seen that in my time. That's never been done before. That's thuggery. I wouldn't in a million years think of asking any venue to do something like that."

Despite Arum's anger, it's still a venue Pacquiao likes. He said he felt at home there, despite the signage that said he was in somebody else's house.

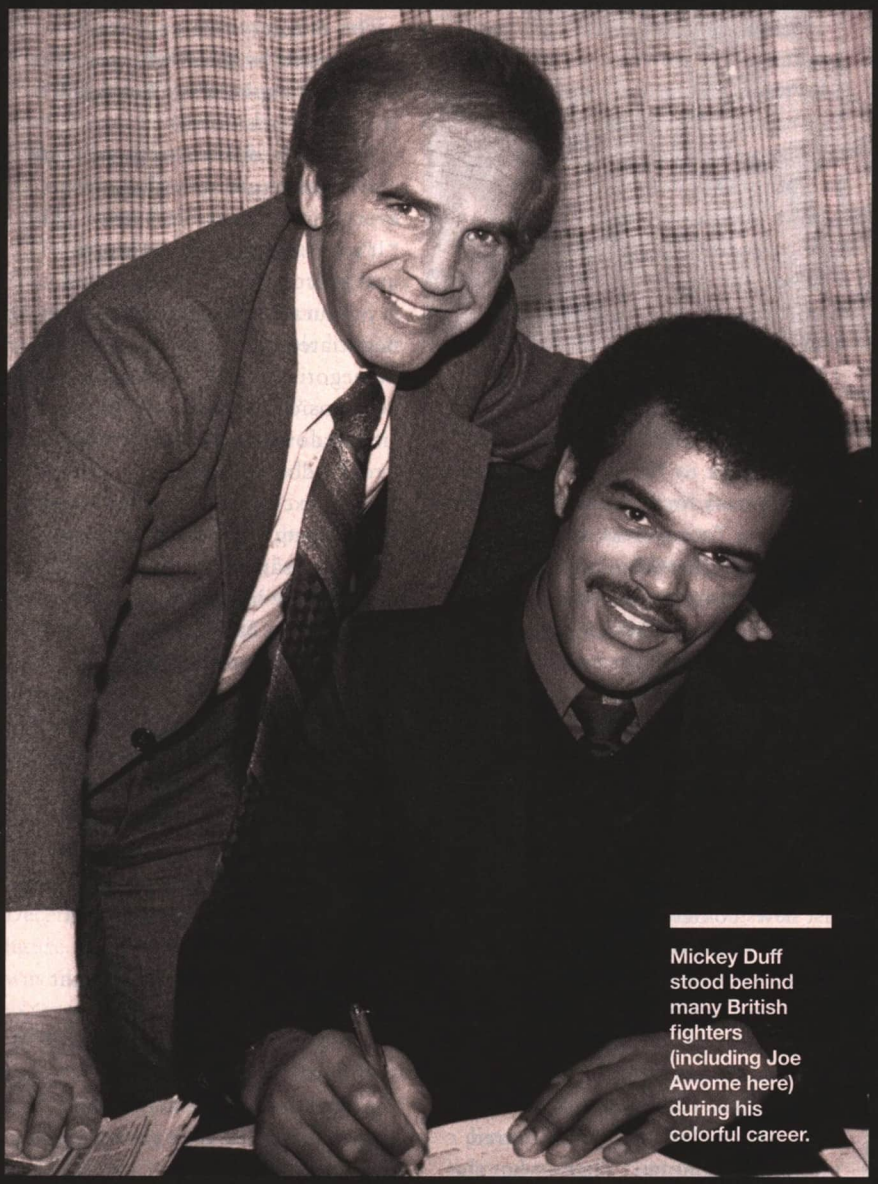
"If you ask me, I'd rather fight here," he said. "I started at the MGM Grand, and where I start, I will finish."

After a grown-up victory, he sounded like the only grown-up in the room. RING

A BRITISH ORIGINAL

THE LATE **MICKEY DUFF** WAS A SUCCESSFUL BOXER, MATCHMAKER, PROMOTER AND MUCH MORE

By **Gareth A Davies**



Mickey Duff stood behind many British fighters (including Joe Awome here) during his colorful career.

Mickey Duff, Britain's most prominent boxing promoter between 1965 and the early '80s, died on March 22. He was 84.

He has been described by those who worked with him since his passing as "the ultimate hustler."

"If Damon Runyon had written a British version of *Guys and Dolls*, Mickey Duff would have certainly been one of the main characters," Hall of Fame boxing scribe Colin Hart, who knew Duff for 50 years, told me.

The comments were meant as a compliment.

Duff had a touch of genius for ducking and diving as well as any of his champions in the ring. He was also a prolific gambler.

And he always seemed to get his way by hook or by crook. He lied his way to getting a boxing license as a teenager, aged 15, but then went on to become matchmaker, manager and promoter, delivered with a Machiavellian desire to make the most money for himself – and his fighters.

Duff boxed for four years immediately after World War II, fighting in the London Schools Championships before turning pro. He changed his name to prevent his father from hearing

of his new exploits.

He fought professionally 44 times as a lightweight and welterweight, losing only eight times, according to boxrec.com. But he knew he was not good enough to become a champion and retired at only 19 before he suffered any damage.

He later managed 19 world champions. But that was only the tip of his pugilistic iceberg.

Monek Prager was born in 1929 in Tarnow, Poland, the son of a rabbi. His parents immigrated to England in 1938, fleeing from the rise of the Nazi Party and mounting anti-Semitism in central Europe.

Prager, soon to be "Mickey Duff," arrived at East India Docks in 1938 with two words of English: "Thank you."

After his four-year stint as a boxer, then a brief stint as a salesman, Duff went into boxing as a manager and promoter. He worked for Jack Solomons, then joined forces with Harry Levene, Jarvis Astaire, Mike Barrett and the British Broadcasting Corporation, with whom they had an exclusive contract. It led to the formation of a cartel, which controlled rights to the most important venues in London and was a near monopoly within British boxing until the early '80s.

Until Duff, the boxing world was dominated by Solomons, who had promoted the fight between Randolph Turpin and Sugar Ray Robinson in which Robinson lost his middleweight title.

Duff was determined to succeed and his influence grew in the '50s. "I think I was fighting an inferiority complex born out of having to struggle," he noted in his memoir, *Twenty And Out* (1999).

Teaming with entrepreneur Astaire in the 1960s proved to be an inspired move. In 1964 they opened the Anglo-American Sporting Club at the Hilton Hotel on Park Lane, and brought Robinson back for an eight-rounder.

Duff did not fear upsetting the underworld even though notorious East End gangsters The Krays once sent his wife a flower box containing dead rats after he banned them from attending one of his shows.

But his empire began to crumble, and he eventually retired from promoting after the rise of Frank Warren, who had partnerships with ITV and Sky, while Eddie Hearn, Frank Maloney and Barney Eastwood were also becoming successful.

Warren was Duff's *bête noire*. The dislike was fueled when Frank Bruno was lured away from Duff with big money offered by satellite television – Sky Sports – as pay per view took hold.

Duff claimed that he had always been loyal to the BBC, and counted it as "one of my major mistakes." Famously, he said: "If you want loyalty, get a dog."

His powers as a promoter began to wane in the late '80s; a decade later, with no television deals to finance his bouts, he had only one fighter on his books, Billy Schwer. He retired permanently in 1999.

Warren, who referred to the pugnacious Duff as "a boxing legend" in his tribute column in *The Sun* newspaper, told me Duff was "one of the most important figures in post-War British boxing. At his pinnacle he was one of the most astute matchmakers."

Erstwhile British Boxing Board Secretary Simon Block also paid his respects.

"Mickey was a larger than life character, and his mental agility, knowledge and his instinct for and judgment of the sport, made him a unique and a world figure, and certainly I doubt we will see his like again," Block said.

"These qualities made him formidable competition, and it might be said that until Frank Warren began to assert himself in sport in the '80s he really was without equal. He once told me that when he was younger he never had a telephone book. He kept everyone's number in his head.

"His work was his life, and apart from gambling he appeared to have little outside interests," Block continued. "In the days before mobile phones he once told me that the only time he relaxed was waiting to board or actually flying on airplanes.

"He said it never bothered him if there was a delay as he was perfectly happy until the plane landed, and then he could get going again."

Block believes Duff was "a boxing great" and "a master of timing and knowing when to make that big match for one of his boxers."

The retired Schwer, Duff's final project, recalled Duff fondly, insisting he had "learned so much about life and business."

"Our first meeting was when I was 19," Schwer said. "He saw me box for Young England against Young Yugoslavia at the Hilton Hotel. After the fight, and he said to my dad, "if you ever think about turning pro to come and see me."

Two years later he turned pro. They sat down at Duff's office on Wardour Street, in the heart of Soho, London's bustling Theatre district.

"He was a grafter, a Jewish businessman," said Schwer. "I spent a lot of time with Mickey. We flew over to Hong Kong and sat together – 14 hours, non-stop chatter – and then we flew to Vegas and sat next to each other again. I was very much into business, and I loved finding out

about how he hustled, how he put the deals together. He made things happen.

"One of my stories about Mickey ... I kept asking him for money. I always had some idea about how I could get paid more. He used to say, 'Billy, you must be Jewish.' I'd like it known that he never took the 25 percent, ever, which he was entitled to. He always took less with me.

"He was a fighter, he was a survivor. You've got to respect him. He stepped into the ring and had a day of being a professional fighter. And he was a hustler. I spent a lot of time with him. He had a world of knowledge. The impact he's had on boxing ..."

Colin Hart indeed had spent a great deal of his career learning from Duff.

"He was a friend of mine for 50 years, but he wasn't just a friend; he was my mentor," said Hart. "What little knowledge I've got about boxing, most of it I learned from Mickey Duff. He was arguably the greatest matchmaker in history. So good that Madison Square Garden begged him to be their matchmaker, Las Vegas had taken over as the capital of boxing by then but he turned them down because he did not want to live in America.

"Billy Walker was the biggest name in British boxing at one time, "The Blonde Bomber." He sold out Wembley nine times, which is still a record, but he never won a title. Billy had no defense, so they realized that they had to do something. So we spoke to George, Billy's brother and manager, and they agreed that Mickey would go to New York and get Harry Wiley, who used to train Sugar Ray Robinson, to come over and teach Billy some defense.

"They were working in the gym off Cambridge Circus, and Mickey walked in there one afternoon. The place was empty except for Billy and Harry Wiley. Mickey could see that Harry was trying to teach Billy to be a fancy-dan boxer, which was never going to work. And, anyway, he would have lost all his support. People loved watching Billy because of his slam-bam style.

"Mickey started going off at Harry saying, 'that's not the f---ing idea' and going off on Harry something awful. Harry got very hurt, and he said, 'Mickey, remember I trained Sugar Ray Robinson.' And Mickey looked at him and said, 'How many fighters have you trained, Harry?' 'I don't know,' Harry replied. Mickey replied, 'Just take an educated guess.' He said, 'Oh, about 500.' 'Why did you only make one Sugar Ray Robinson then?'

"He was full of wisecracks and wisdom. He was born with it. He got into serious trouble gambling. He was brilliant when he gambled on boxing because you understood it, but on the table he once owed Caesar's Palace a big sum of money. He was very worried, and they were after him for it.

It was veteran sports writer and editor Alan Hubbard who called Duff "the ultimate hustler."

"I grew up journalistically with him," explained the highly-respected former sports editor of *The Observer*, who still pens a weekly column, often on boxing. "He could have played the part of any hustler in any film. He was as tough and sharp as any of his boxers. I remember him saying once: "He's no matchmaker. He couldn't match the cheeks of his own backside.

"He knew every nut and bolt of the business," added Hubbard. "I remember he had Alan Rudkin fighting up in north Wales in a small hall. Mickey was there putting out the seats. There wasn't a minute detail of the boxing business he did not know about."

With his wife of more than 50 years, Marie, Duff had a son, Gary. Mickey would not let him box. "If my son had wanted to box, I would have waited until he was asleep then broken his hands," he said.

Top Rank promoter Bob Arum called him "a bulldog."

"Oh Jesus, I had so many dealings with Mickey," recalled Arum. "I first met Mickey when we brought Muhammad Ali over to England to fight Henry Cooper at Arsenal Stadium. That's when I met Mickey and Jarvis, and I did tremendous amounts of work together over the years with Mickey, whether it was Alan Minter, John Mugabi or Jim Watt.

"We did a lot of fights together. I don't know about a hustler, maybe that has a bad connotations. Mickey was very driven and a bear cat. [Promoter] Eileen Eaton and myself used to make fun of him because he couldn't relax, really a bulldog. Mickey was a real character."

Duff was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of fame in 1999.

There were around 70 people at Duff's memorial service a few days after his death. Among the boxers there were Schwer, Duke McKenzie, Henry Wharton and Bobby Neill.

Final word to Colin Hart, his associate, friend and ally for five decades.

Hart wondered about one thing. "Now that Mickey has gone through the Pearly Gates," he said, "I bet the first thing he tried to do is make a match between Jack Dempsey and Joe Louis. That's what he's up to, I bet you."

Mickey Duff, RIP.

THE FIGHT OF A LIFETIME

Rubin "Hurricane" Carter became a symbol for the wrongly convicted.

RUBIN 'HURRICANE' CARTER'S GREATEST VICTORY WAS REGAINING HIS FREEDOM

By **Tim Smith**

There were many sides to Rubin "Hurricane" Carter. To some people he was a menacing, ferocious middleweight contender. To others he was the epitome of African-American men who had been falsely accused and wrongly convicted. To many he symbolized the indomitable spirit of man's fight for freedom.

All of those facets of Carter's persona came flooding back into the public consciousness after he died from prostate cancer at his home in Toronto on April 20. He was 76.

"To see a guy who had enough courage and fortitude to be able to say that this is something I didn't do and stand up for it through all those years is amazing," said Bernard Hopkins, the 49-year-old IBF and WBA light heavyweight champion. "Hopefully his legacy lives on. I respect the guy more for what he did out of the ring than what he did in the ring."

Carter never earned a

middleweight title, but he was a champion to many who seek justice when the scales are tipped against them. His boxing career was derailed by a 19-year prison term in New Jersey on a murder conviction that was dismissed twice on the grounds of prosecutorial misconduct before a judge finally freed him. He became a cause celebre, garnering the support of social activists, celebrities and musicians from around the world. Bob Dylan wrote a hit song, "The Hurricane," about Carter in 1975, stirring greater interest in his case.

When he was finally released in 1985, Carter moved to Canada and worked with the group that helped get his convictions overturned. They founded Innocence International, a nonprofit organization that works to free prisoners whom it considers wrongly convicted. A movie about Carter's life, starring Denzel Washington, was produced in 1999. Washington was nominated for an Academy Award.

Through it all, there was always the question of whether Carter and his acquaintance, John Artis, were indeed involved in the murder of two men and a woman at the Lafayette Bar and Grill in Paterson, N.J., on the early morning of June 17, 1966.

Jerry Izenberg, a longtime sports columnist for the Newark-based *Star-Ledger*, knew Carter and followed both his boxing career and his odyssey through the New Jersey justice system. Izenberg remembers that when the case first went to trial, there were doubts about Carter's guilt.

"There are two things here with Hurricane Carter. Is he innocent and how is he treated?" Izenberg said. "I can't say he was framed, although he might have been. It's very difficult to say. There were witnesses who were impeached. The better word is that he was railroaded. He definitely was railroaded. The Passaic County prosecutor's office decided that he was going to prison, and they sent him to prison."

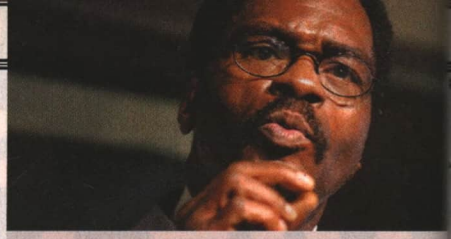
According to the defense, on the night of the murders Carter ran into Artis, whom he called a casual acquaintance, at another bar a few miles away from where four people – three white men and a white woman – were shot. He was giving Artis a ride home when they were stopped by the Paterson police, who said Carter's white Dodge sedan looked like the murderers' getaway car. Other than being black, Carter and Artis didn't match the original description of the killers. Neither the male survivor nor the woman, who died from her injuries a month later, was able to identify them.

Two months later they were both charged with murder. The prosecution called it revenge for a black bartender who was killed by a white man earlier that evening. Two men who said they were committing a burglary near the Lafayette Bar and Grill claimed they saw Carter and Artis leaving with guns in their hands. They later recanted that testimony.

"Two trials and the witnesses at both were shaky. He was treated very unfairly in terms of getting a fair trial," Izenberg said.

Some still dispute Carter's innocence, however. They point out that the two verdicts weren't overturned because of evidence, but rather on procedural grounds. Others point to inaccuracies in the movie version or bring up his criminal history. Still others mention allegations that Carter beat a woman in a hotel room while out on parole awaiting his second trial.

Whatever the forces that put



RUBIN CARTER: THROUGH THE YEARS

1937 – Born on May 6 in Clifton, N.J.

1951 – Sent to a juvenile reformatory for assault.

1954 – Escapes from the reformatory and enlists in the Army, where he begins boxing.

1956 – Discharged from the Army and soon arrested for escaping from the reformatory, for which he is incarcerated. More trouble – including muggings, assault and robbery – leads to more time in prison.

1962 – Upon his release from prison, he becomes a professional boxer at 24.

1963 – Climbs into THE RING Magazine middleweight ratings and scores his biggest victory, a first-round TKO of Hall of Famer Emile Griffith.

1964 – Loses a unanimous decision to middleweight champ Joey Giardello in his only title fight.

1966 – Loses a unanimous decision to Juan Carlos Rivero in his final pro fight. Finishes his career with a record of 27-12-1 (19 knockouts).

1966 – Two males fatally shoot two men and a woman in a bar on June 17 in Paterson, N.J.

1967 – Carter and fellow suspect John Artis are convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison.

1974 – After witnesses recant testimony against Carter, a motion for a retrial is filed, but is initially denied.

1975 – Bob Dylan records the protest song "Hurricane" in support of Carter.

1976 – The verdict is overturned and Carter is released to await a new trial. Carter and Artis are retried and found guilty again. Artis is paroled in 1981.

1982 – Upon appeal of the second conviction, the Supreme Court of New Jersey affirms Carter's conviction.

1985 – Released from prison at 48 after a federal judge grants a writ of habeas corpus filed by his attorneys. Another appeals court upholds the decision, and the U.S. Supreme Court refuses to hear the case.

1999 – *The Hurricane*, a movie starring Denzel Washington as Carter, premieres.

1993-2005 – Living in Toronto, runs the Association in the Defence of the Wrongly Convicted.

2012 – Reveals that he has prostate cancer and is given only months to live.

2014 – Dies on April 20.

RINGPHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES

him there, it's what Carter endured inside, while fighting his convictions for 19 years, that turned him into an icon.

He refused to yield to the dictates of prison life. He wouldn't wear the prison uniform or eat the prison food. Displaying an iron will, Carter would not relent in his pursuit to have his conviction overturned.

Hopkins, who spent five years in a Pennsylvania prison on an armed robbery charge and another nine years on probation, said taking that kind of stand in prison is unheard of.

"That's very difficult because they put you in a hole until they break that spirit that you're holding on to. They will call it rebelling," Hopkins said. "You have to get hungry some time, and the physical part takes over. To be able to say that you're not going be spiritually and mentally broken while you're physically in prison takes a very strong person. He didn't accept that he was guilty so spiritually he wasn't there. Yes his body was there, but he never gave up that he'd be free."

Carter became the fighter in prison that he might have been if his boxing career hadn't been interrupted. Izenberg said Carter went through a metamorphosis.

"There were two halves to him," Izenberg said. "He was violent, even vicious at times. He hit people, men and women. It didn't matter. But he was also a very bright man."

Carter was born in Clifton, N.J., on May 6, 1937, and trouble was close on his heels. His father, Lloyd, was a deacon in the Baptist church, and he put Carter to work at the age of 8 cutting and delivering ice. When he learned that Carter and some other boys had stolen some clothes from a store in Paterson, N.J., Lloyd Carter turned his son in to the police. Carter was placed on two years' probation. He was 11 years old.

At age 14 he was charged with stabbing a man who he said tried to sexually assault him and was sent to Jamesburg State Home for Boys. After three years, he escaped and landed at an aunt's house in Philadelphia. He joined the Army and became a paratrooper in the 101st Airborne Division in Germany, where he began to box. He went a reported 51-5 (with 35 knockouts) and became the Army's European junior welterweight champion.

'WHAT [CARTER] STOOD FOR WAS BEYOND BOXING. I'VE BEEN THERE, AND I UNDERSTAND. IT TAKES A LOT TO STAND UP TO PEOPLE WHO ARE TRYING TO TAKE AWAY YOUR FREEDOM.'
– BERNARD HOPKINS

After he was discharged from the Army, he made his way back to Paterson, where New Jersey authorities tracked him down and arrested him for escaping from the reform school. He was sentenced to 10 months at the Annandale Reformatory.

Shortly after being released from the reform school, he was charged with snatching a woman's purse and assaulting a man on a street in Paterson. He served four years in Trenton State Prison. He began boxing again and caught the attention of fight managers, who played up his criminal past to promote him as the menacing destructive force – thus the nickname "The Hurricane" – in the ring.

A day after he was released from prison, he made his pro debut, winning a four-round decision that earned him a $20 purse. Carter was a 5-foot-8 bundle of raging muscle, who dressed in all black and entered the ring with a hooded robe to intimidate his opponents. He was a brawler in the strictest sense.

"I liked him very much. He could fight," Izenberg said. "If you have to rate him, you have to say he was a good fighter. Once Hollywood got a hold of him, he was Jack Johnson. And if you get Denzel Washington to play a fighter, you don't make him a bum."

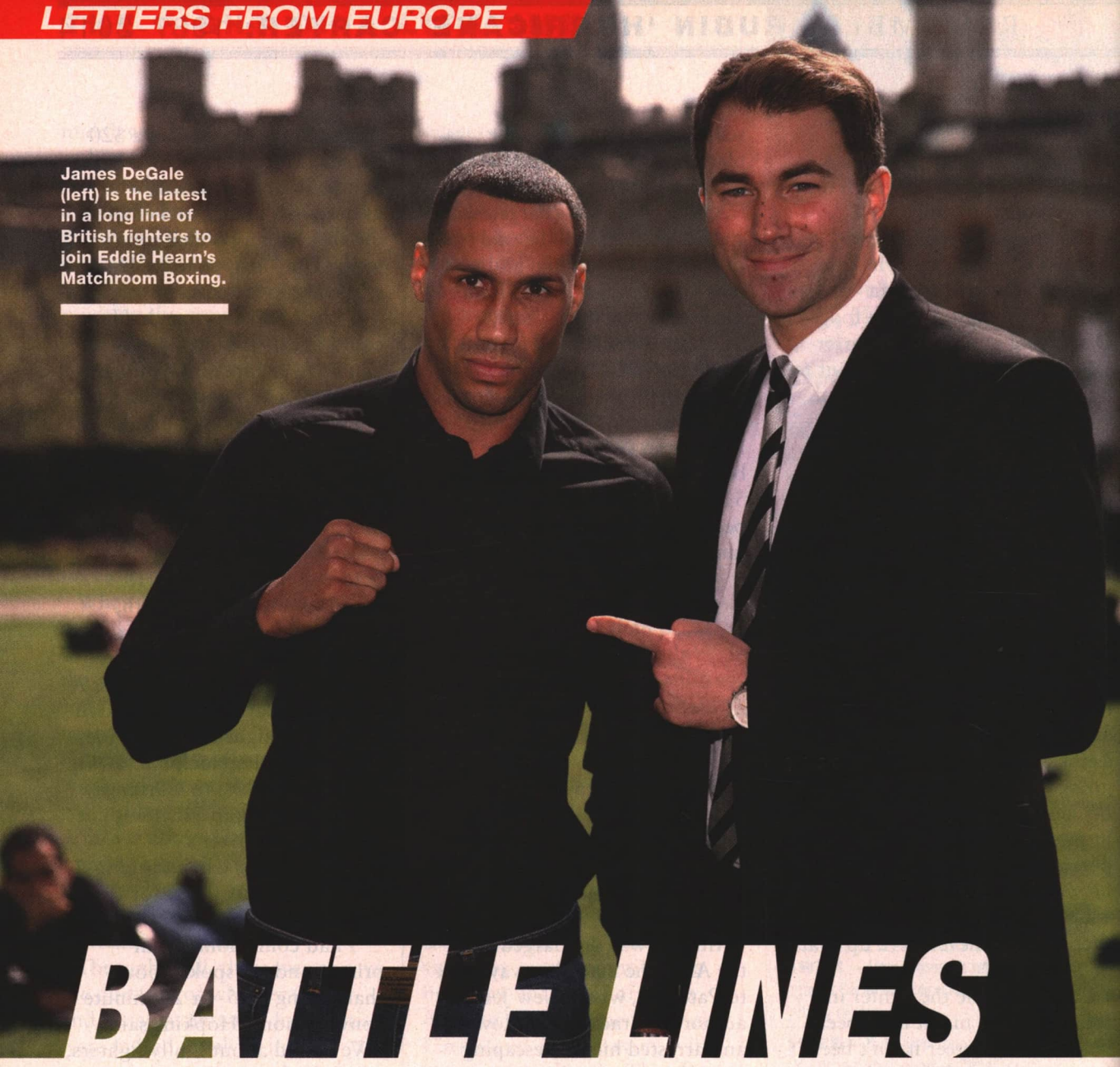
Carter had two big bouts before going to prison. He knocked out Emile Griffith, the welterweight champion moving up to contend for the middleweight crown, in 1963. A year later, Carter lost a decision to middleweight champion Joey Giardello in Philadelphia.

Hopkins spoke to Carter at a book signing in Philadelphia to promote Carter's autobiography when Hopkins was starting his quest for the middleweight championship.

"I had come home from prison, and we spoke about that during a 15- or 20-minute conversation," Hopkins said. "We talked about Philly fighters, which he knew all about, being from New Jersey. He was really giving me some knowledge about training and not taking anybody for granted."

Hopkins walked away from that conversation with overwhelming respect for Carter's indomitable will and spirit.

"What he stood for was beyond boxing," Hopkins said. "I've been there, and I understand. It takes a lot to stand up to people who are trying to take away your freedom. He fought that for years. It was like him saying, 'You might take my boxing career, but you're not going to take my life.'"



James DeGale (left) is the latest in a long line of British fighters to join Eddie Hearn's Matchroom Boxing.

BATTLE LINES

IT APPEARS BOXERS DEFECTING TO **EDDIE HEARN** WILL HAVE TO PUT UP A FIGHT

By **Gareth A Davies**

They say never leave it in the hands of the judges. This one looks inevitable, though: James DeGale and Nathan Cleverly are surely headed toward a judge's decision, but most likely in a court of law.

It has been a time of upheaval on the U.K. scene once again, with DeGale and Cleverly breaking from long-term promotional deals.

In April, former WBO light heavyweight champion Cleverly completed a shock move to Eddie Hearn's Matchroom Sport stable, splitting with promoter Frank Warren after a 9-year association. He followed lightweight Ricky Burns, who left Warren for Hearn last year.

Hearn seems intent on stacking his stable and cards in his exclusive contract with broadcaster Sky Sports and its pay-per-view platform.

Meanwhile, rival broadcaster BoxNation, the boxing subscription channel part-owned by Warren, could argue that it has shown the biggest fights from around the world this year – including the ring appearances of Manny Pacquiao, Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Amir Khan.

Cleverly called it "Chapter 2,"

joining Hearn ahead of a comeback fight at cruiserweight that was tentatively scheduled for May 17 at press time.

The move up to the 200-pound division came after Sergey Kovalev took Cleverly's WBO light heavyweight title with a brutal fourth-round stoppage defeat last August. Cleverly needs to rebuild both his confidence and his frame.

The obvious road ahead is a rematch with Tony Bellew, another Hearn fighter, who made his cruiserweight debut with a thrilling knockout of veteran Valery Brudov in mid-March.

Enmity has existed between Cleverly and Bellew dating back to a rowdy, ill-tempered press conference before the former claimed a points victory in a defense of his light heavyweight belt in 2011.

Cleverly believes it is "inevitable" that he will fight Bellew again. "We're on a collision course," he said.

On the eve of the Cleverly move, Warren told me that Cleverly was "still under contract."

DeGale soon followed, becoming the next in the long line of British fighters to join Matchroom.

The carrot had been dangled: DeGale would face Brandon Gonzales in a final eliminator for the IBF super middleweight title on May 31 at Wembley Stadium. Part of the deal was that the 2008 Olympic gold medal hero was offered the winner of Carl Froch and George Groves if he defeated Gonzales, who trains with Andre Ward and Amir Khan.

DeGale is intimidated by neither Groves nor Froch. Groves beat him three years ago by a razor-tight decision, his only career loss, though like many ringside, I had the fight by a point the other way for DeGale.

"Carl is an easier fight as he is made for me, but with George and I, it is personal. I get angry talking about him. I'm ready for whoever is there, but I'm concentrating on Brandon Gonzales," said DeGale.

Promoter Mick Hennessy claimed with alacrity that lawyers may become involved. "The agreement [with DeGale] had several years to run, and we had put him into an excellent position on the world super middleweight stage.

"Unfortunately the company has been given no alternative but to put the matter into the hands of its lawyers and we are currently considering our legal options against DeGale."

Hennessy added that legal action against Hearn may also follow, or even against the broadcaster or sanctioning body involved.

★

Reigning IBF bantamweight champion Stuart Hall has a fascinating defense against challenger Paul Butler in an all-British summer showdown June 7 at Newcastle's Metro Radio Arena.

Hall will not give up the title lightly, though Butler looks to be the growing force. It's set to be an explosive clash, pitching contrasting styles. Hardened Hall is the solid, respected world champion; Butler the young upstart, flashy, unbeaten.

Hall, a former British and Commonwealth bantamweight champion, won the vacant IBF crown in dramatic style when he defeated teak-tough South African Vusi Malinga last December.

The reformed Ibiza "party animal" was brave and inspired in one of the great performances in a British ring. With his left eye totally closed and grotesquely swollen, and cuts above both, he battled away to claim the belt on the scorecards.

In his first defense, Hall, 34, retained the title when a clash of heads with Martin Ward resulted in a two-round technical draw.

Now comes a different challenge altogether. Hall and Butler have been sparring partners, and the champion claims to have had the better of the challenger. But how often have gym fights translated to the same outcome under the bright lights in front of a baying crowd?

"Butler is a very good fighter. His performances have got himself into this position, but he's also talked himself into this fight by making derogatory comments. I'll make him eat his words," said Hall.

There will be plenty of backing for Butler. The 25-year-old has no missteps since his 2011 pro debut; he's undefeated in 15 fights with a 60 percent KO rate. The move up to bantamweight came this year after success at junior bantamweight, where he claimed the British and Commonwealth titles.

He caused a major stir in his bantamweight debut in March against Argentine Oreste Bernabe Nieva, who had never been

U.K. TOP 10

1. **CARL FROCH**
2. **AMIR KHAN**
3. **KELL BROOK**
4. **CARL FRAMPTON**
5. **GEORGE GROVES**
6. **TYSON FURY**
7. **SCOTT QUIGG**
8. **MARTIN MURRAY**
9. **JAMES DEGALE**
10. **NATHAN CLEVERLY**

Five more (in alphabetical order): Paul Butler, Billy Joe Saunders, Stuart Hall, Ricky Burns, Jamie McDonnell.

Through fights of April 20

previously stopped. Butler set about him with fast, stinging jabs, powerful right hands and vicious body shots. The South American was finished off in the fourth, with a sickening left hook to the ribs.

Butler has been hailed in some quarters as "the new Ricky Hatton" in part because of his vicious attacks alternating between head and body. There are strains of Barry McGuigan here, too.

Confidence oozes from Butler, who offers respect to the champion but adds that he'll "smoke [Hall's] boots." Big talk.

Hall and Butler's respective promoters, Dennis Hobson and Frank Warren, expect a British classic.

"Paul is a very accomplished fighter, and I think he's a future world champion, but I believe this chance has come too early for him and against the wrong opponent,"said Hobson, who promoted Ricky Hatton's career for four fights.

"Stuart has got everything you need in a world champion. He's incredibly strong, he's brave and his boxing skills are hugely underrated. He'll be on top of Butler from the opening bell."

Warren believes Butler's "ice cold determination" will edge it for him.

"Stuart has age, physical maturity and experience on his side, but that is countered with Paul's youth, confidence and aggression," said Warren.

"And while it is a calculated gamble on both Paul and my parts, I see similarities to when Naseem Hamed went to Steve Robinson's Cardiff backyard to take his WBO world featherweight title."

Fascinating assessment from Warren. Hamed schooled Robinson.

Scott Quigg's recent second-round knockout of Tshifhiwa Munyai (right) brought him closer to a showdown with Carl Frampton.

★

Another tussle for supremacy in the division above, between Carl Frampton and Scott Quigg, continues. Both have had fine victories in recent weeks.

Frampton cemented his position as mandatory challenger for the WBC junior featherweight title held by Leo Santa Cruz with a second-round knockout of Mexican Hugo Cazares on April 4.

Frampton came out aggressively, landed heavy shots in the opening round and then, after seemingly hitting Cazares in the thigh to deaden the Mexican's leg in the second, floored his opponent with a vicious left hook that took his legs from underneath him.

Cazares miscalculated and was counted out, but he was clearly hurt. He was hitherto unbeaten at junior featherweight, a former two-weight world champion and had not been stopped since 1999.

The Northern Irishman, already ranked No. 1 in the junior featherweight division (under Champion Guillermo Rigondeaux) by THE RING Magazine, has pledged to meet Santa Cruz, 25, who is unbeaten in 28 fights, any time, any place.

There is already interest from Golden Boy Promotions.

"We believe we have a great chance against Santa Cruz, and we are very, very comfortable

about that fight, and we're happy to travel anywhere," said McGuigan, Frampton's manager.

Frampton is, in a sense, already proven at the elite level. He has already beaten IBF titleholder Kiko Martinez, who appears intent on avoiding him. McGuigan has tried to negotiate a title fight but accuses the Spaniard of being "a time-waster." Some of the same criticism is being leveled at domestic rival Scott Quigg, who sits behind only Rigondeaux in the WBA's rankings.

"Leo Santa Cruz is in a different league to Scott Quigg," said McGuigan. "We believe he's the guy to go for. That's the most exciting fight in the [junior featherweight] division. Everybody in boxing is salivating about it as a potential fight."

McGuigan told me his charge is "a student of the game." He said Frampton pores over tape of Julio Caesar Chavez, Roberto Duran, Alexis Arguello, Alfonso Zamora, Carlos Zarate and Salvador Sanchez.

He's also a sparring addict. He had 200 rounds ahead of the Cazares contest. "Carl likes to spar loads and loads and loads, and he's a bit like Mike McCallum. He used to spar 15 rounds every time he sparred." Frampton does explode with the leather when he attacks. And he has a spite about him.

Just a couple of weeks after Frampton's impressive showing, in Manchester, Quigg made a statement of his own by stopping South African Tshifiwa Munyai in the second round.

Although Munyai was a late replacement, the South African was expected to be a test. Yet the 25-year-old Quigg dropped Munyai with a hard left hand in the opening round, and referee Howard Foster Jr. had seen enough and halted the contest when Munyai hit the canvas for a second time.

The victory brings Quigg, unbeaten in 30 fights, closer to a world showdown with Frampton, although it appears the rivals are aiming to meet when they are both world champions.

"I wanted to make a statement. No one's ever done that to Munyai. I've gone in there and demolished him," said Quigg.

★

Is it finally all over for Enzo Maccarinelli?

Six years after Maccarinelli's high-profile cruiserweight title showdown against David Haye, followed by a couple of years of being on the wrong end of topsy-turvy KOs, the 33-year-old had a chance at redemption when he fought light heavyweight contender Juergen Braehmer in Rostock, Germany.

Three victories at 175 pounds had renewed Maccarinelli's vigor after a torrid period in his career during which his father passed away and his son was diagnosed with autism.

But it was to be a difficult night in Germany for the valiant Welshman. He was stopped due to a gruesome eye injury, his right eye having closed after a clash of heads with southpaw technician in the opening round.

As the fight wore on, the right side of Maccarinelli's face began to swell up into a grotesque mask. Maccarinelli was unable see out of his damaged eye by the end of the second round. Trainer Gary Lockett allowed him to go on in spite of three inspections from the ringside medic.

By the end of the fifth, Lockett began unwrapping his charge's gloves. He had seen enough in spite of Maccarinelli having buckled Braehmer's legs a couple or three times.

"I can't let you go on Enzo," he said. "Your face looks awful, it's too bad."

Maccarinelli, 33, dropped to 38-7 on his career record, and ranked No. 7 by the WBA, it is difficult to see where he might get another world title shot.

Braehmer, the 35-year-old champion, moved to 43-2.

"I'm not going to say I would have won, but I do believe it would have been a different story, a lot harder for him," said Maccarinelli.

Lockett and his charge need to think hard. "Enzo and I will sit down now," said Lockett, "and decide whether he wants to carry on with his career." RING

Gareth A Davies is Boxing Correspondent for *The Telegraph*, London.

BEST OF DOUGIE'S MAILBAG

RINGTV.COM EDITOR'S POPULAR COLUMN NOW APPEARS IN THE RING MAGAZINE

By **Doug Fischer**

Since 2001, RingTV.com Editor Doug Fischer has held an ongoing dialog – which occasionally becomes heated debate – with boxing fans from around the world in "Dougie's Mailbag."

The editors of THE RING are periodically compiling excerpts from Fischer's online column from previous months to appear in the printed edition. The following excerpts are from the April 4, 11 and 14 editions of the Monday and Friday mailbag.

OZZIE, from Garden Grove, Calif., asked Fischer to settle a boxing debate he often has with his friends who believe that former RING 122-pound champ Nonito Donaire would have defeated Erik Morales if they were able to face each other in a junior featherweight bout. Ozzie believes that Morales, a former beltholder at 122, 126, 130 and 140 pounds, would have handled the "Filipino Flash." Fischer gave his thoughts on the Morales-Donaire mythical matchup and four others that Ozzie brought up: Julio Cesar Chavez Sr. vs. Miguel Cotto at 140 pounds, Ricardo Lopez vs. Michael Carbajal, Gennady Golovkin vs. Gerald McClellan and Oscar De La Hoya vs. Cotto at 140 and 147.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: Morales wasn't gifted with the natural talent and athletic ability that Donaire has but he was a far more complete fighter with better technique and a more active style.

If we're talking about a mythical matchup at 122 pounds, we have to keep in mind that Donaire began his career at flyweight and probably peaked at bantamweight. I think he lost some of his phenomenal speed and world-class power once he stepped above 118 pounds. Morales, on the other hand, was at his fastest at 122 pounds and he probably punched hardest at that weight, where he scored eight consecutive WBC title-bout stoppages (including Daniel Zaragoza and Junior Jones). I think "El Terrible" may have had some trouble with Donaire's speed, movement and unorthodox style early in the fight, but once he got warmed up I think he'd outwork and punish Donaire to a unanimous decision.

Your other mythical matchups:

- Chavez Sr. vs. Cotto at 140 – Chavez by UD or late TKO in a very good fight.
- Ricardo Lopez vs. Michael Carbajal – Lopez by clear UD in a good fight.
- GGG vs. Gerald McClellan – Golovkin by late TKO in a grueling but technical power-punching shootout.
- De La Hoya vs. Cotto 140 or 147 – The Golden Boy by clear UD at 140; by unpopular SD at 147.

KEN, of Cork, Ireland, was delighted that Manny Pacquiao won his rematch with Tim Bradley. Ken gave Bradley credit for facing the Filipino icon twice and for doing "what top fighters are supposed to do – challenge themselves" and asked if Pacquiao's revenge victory over "the legit welterweight champ" adds to the PacMan's legacy?

DOUGIE'S REPLY: I don't agree that Bradley was "the legit welterweight champ." He held the WBO belt, while THE RING – and most of the boxing world – recognizes Floyd Mayweather Jr. as the 147-pound division's true champion. But there's no denying that "Desert Storm" entered Saturday's rematch as one of the top two or three welterweights in the world, as well as a Top 3 to 5 pound-for-pound rated fighter. Bradley was also coming off of a Fighter of the Year-worthy 2013, so career momentum, along with youth, was in his favor.

However, despite the fact that Pacquiao was 1-2 (including a devastating KO loss) in his last three bouts and entering his mid-30s, he soundly beat Timmy. I scored it 116-112 (8 to 4 in rounds) for Pacquiao. I only scored Rounds 1, 4, 5 and 11 for Bradley.

Of course this latest victory further enhances PacMan's legacy. Revenge/redemption victories against quality opposition always do. Despite his considerable accomplishments, most fans would not consider Lennox Lewis to be one of the Top 10 to 15 heavyweight champs in history if he hadn't avenged his losses to Oliver McCall and Hasim Rahman and his controversial draw with Evander Holyfield.

And you're absolutely right that we should give Bradley his props for the effort he gave during 24 rounds with one of the best fighters of the past 20 years. I don't think this loss hurts his budding legacy. His record still has the names of two first-ballot hall of famers (Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez) on it along with his considerable accomplishments at 140 pounds.

Bradley will be back, and I look forward to watching him grow from his latest experience.

I'll even give Bradley props for trying to take out Pacquiao, although it

Doug Fischer says that revenge victories – like Manny Pacquiao's decision over Tim Bradley in their rematch – greatly enhance a fighter's legacy.

was absolutely the wrong thing to do.

JUAN, a longtime boxing fan from Tijuana, Mexico, says when he thinks about Pacquiao's featherweight and junior lightweight fights against the legendary Mexican trio of Erik Morales, Marco Antonio Barrera and Juan Manuel Marquez, and then considers his victory over an elite fighter in his prime like Bradley, he can't help but believe the Filipino star is one of the greatest fighters of all time. Juan, who says he's been watching boxing for 27 years, adds that Pacquiao's run at welterweight is a historic feat that will not be replicated.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: I don't think his welterweight run is all that spectacular. It's been good, but it doesn't stand out among the all-time great 147-pound title runs.

What's certainly notable about his welterweight run is that he isn't a natural 147-pounder at all. The fact that he won his first title at flyweight is what makes his welterweight run special. The fact that he's a former featherweight champ makes his accomplishments at 147 impressive.

But keep in mind, all-time welterweight champs such as Henry Armstrong, Kid Gavilan and Jose Napoles began their pro careers at featherweight and lighter.

Is Pacquiao one of the greatest of all time? I guess it can be argued that he is given the history he's made, such as winning titles in eight weight classes or being the first flyweight champ to win a featherweight title (and all those major belts at heavier weights). Personally, I don't think he is. Not yet, anyway. I think he had a part in the Mayweather fight not happening when it should have, and that counts against him in my mind, just as it counts against Floyd.

There's no doubt that he's one of the best fighters of the past 20 years. He won three RING Fighter of the Year awards during the 2000s, plus he was the BWAA's Fighter of the Decade (2000s).

However, what makes Pacquiao special to me is the way he rebounds from losses. After losing the WBC flyweight title to Medgoen Singsurat (on the scales before getting stopped in the ring), Pacquiao went unbeaten in his next 15 bouts, winning a 122-pound title from the formidable Lehlo Ledwaba, defending that IBF strap against tough veterans Agapito Sanchez and Jorge Julio, and beating Marco Antonio Barrera for THE RING (and lineal) featherweight championship.

Pacquiao took on Marquez immediately after beating Barrera, who was rated in everyone's pound-for-pound Top 3 when they fought. I'll always respect him for having the balls to do this. Marquez was at his best at featherweight, and he had been avoided by all the stars of the division (Naseem Hamed, Barrera and Erik Morales) for many years. Whether you think Pacquiao won the fight, or should have lost to Marquez, or if you think the draw was fair (as I do), you have to give the dynamic little southpaw props for taking on Barrera (57-3 at the time) and Marquez in back-to-back bouts if you have any respect or understanding of the sport.

One fight after the Marquez draw, Pacquiao took on Morales at 130 pounds and lost a close decision in a classic fight. What did he do after that setback? He ran off 15 consecutive wins that included two stoppages of Morales, rematch decisions over Barrera and Marquez, titles at 130, 135, 140 (if you count THE RING title that Ricky Hatton held – and you should) 147 and 154, plus knockouts of Oscar De La Hoya, Hatton and Miguel Cotto. That's a badass streak. I don't even have to mention the decisions over Top 5 contender Joshua Clottey, future Hall of Famer Shane Mosley, and Margarito (who probably had close to 20 pounds on him on fight night).

Pacquiao is definitely one of the most impressive competitors that I've had the privilege to cover.

Callum Smith has the composure of a fighter who grew up around the sport.

CALLUM SMITH

By **Tom Gray**

THE ESSENTIALS
Age: 24
Weight class: Super middleweight
Height: 6 feet 3 inches
Stance: Orthodox
Hometown: Liverpool, England
Record: 9-0 (7 knockouts)
Biggest Strengths: Crushing power in both hands ★ very effective on the inside for a tall man ★ maturity belies pro experience.
Biggest question marks: Recent hand injuries ★ tends to fight on the inside despite regular height and reach advantages ★ recuperative powers untested.

The Smith brothers are an institution in their home city of Liverpool, England. Four acclaimed professional fighters, three of whom have held or hold British titles in their respective weight classes with the other, Callum, unanimously touted as the most talented of them all.

A series of controversial decisions, in the ring and out, prevented Callum, the youngest of the Smith clan, from participating in the London Olympics in 2012, but his sharp rise within the paid ranks has created real electricity in British boxing circles.

Nine fights, seven knockouts, six

of them in the first round.

"It's flattering that fans are touting me as the next big thing, and it's nice that my dedication to the game is being recognized," Smith said. "Still, I can't get ahead of myself because better fighters than me have failed to win world titles."

If Smith's humility were audible, it could probably pop ear drums. The 24-year-old is as down to earth as any fighter. However, his undoubted talent speaks for itself. It was his all-around ability that caught the attention of one of the U.K.'s biggest promotional firms.

"Callum is a real gem as a professional, and this is only the beginning," said Eddie Hearn, the head of Matchroom Promotions. "He obviously comes from great stock, but what impressed me most about him was his composure inside the ring.

"He won his first two fights by decision, and then this lethal power came out of nowhere. There was a run of six first-round knockouts, the last of which came against Patrick Mendy. This guy had never been stopped in 21 fights, and Callum simply destroyed him.

"We then stepped him up against Ruben Acosta, who had challenged Robert Stieglitz for a world title, and he didn't lose a second of a round. It was a significant jump, but I'm led by his trainer, Joe Gallagher, who sees much more than anyone else in the gym."

Gallagher, who also works with junior featherweight Scott Quigg and the entire Smith quartet, is one of Britain's most successful trainers. The Manchester-born coach, a former amateur fighter, is monomaniacal about his work, and his belief in Callum Smith holds no bounds.

"In the first 12 months of his career, we've had Callum sit down on his shots, and the transition reminds me a lot of Thomas Hearns," Gallagher said. "As an amateur Hearns didn't carry much power, but when he turned pro and got the proper technique in his shots, you saw the results.

"Callum can keep it long but he also fights extremely well inside for such a tall fighter (6 feet 3 inches). His body punching is tremendous, particularly the left hook, but what impresses me most about him is his discipline and desire to learn.

"I have him studying footage of tall fighters like Mark Breland, and he's always 100 percent focused in the gym. He watches his brothers (Paul, Stephen and Liam) in sparring, and when we were out at the Wild Card [Boxing Club] in L.A. he never left the side of the ring.

"He's not cocky or big-headed and always works himself to the bone. There's no ego with Callum. He is very unassuming and the exact opposite of what he is in the ring – a ruthless knockout merchant."

Smith's October win over Acosta was just one part of the fast-tracking process. Hearn believes he can knock down every wall put before him, and more significant tests are imminent.

"We want Callum to reach the Top 15 with a governing body and then look towards eliminators before targeting a world title shot," Hearn said. "That's probably a seven- or eight-fight plan from where we are now, but the time will pass quickly."

The fighter remained understated, but icy, when asked about what promises to be a lucrative and exciting future.

"I'll leave it all up to Matchroom," said Smith. "They've stepped me up a bit at a time with the learning curve fights, and now it's all about testing me. Boxing is a short career and I want to get in, achieve as much as I can, and get out.

"I love to win and the stakes are so high in the professional game. If you don't put in the hard work, then you don't get the rewards. But if you dedicate yourself, good things can happen, and that's what drives me." RING

3 MORE TO WATCH

SCOTT CARDLE
LIGHTWEIGHT
(14-0, 3 KOs)

Cardle, from Blackpool, England, is a sharpshooting boxer with quick reflexes and the ability to win in many ways. The 24-year-old was a standout amateur who has steadily improved since turning professional in 2012. He is trained by Joe Gallagher.

THOMAS STALKER
JUNIOR
WELTERWEIGHT
(7-0, 2 KOs)

Stalker, from Liverpool, England, was the captain of the British Olympic team, which achieved record-breaking success at London 2012. This clever southpaw didn't win a medal but remains unbeaten as a pro. And a serious injury suffered in training is now behind him.

GARY CORNISH
HEAVYWEIGHT
(17-0, 9 KOs)

Scottish heavyweights don't grow on trees, but Cornish could be a legitimate one. Known as "The Highlander," this 6-foot-7 colossus has a minimal amateur pedigree, but his natural athleticism and wingspan are working well for him in the pros. The 26-year-old is approaching domestic title contention.

The fight between Arturo Gatti (right) and Joey Gamache is one of the best examples of a flawed weigh-in system.

WEIGHT AND SEE

MEDICAL EXPERTS CONTINUE TO PUSH FOR SAFER WEIGHT-LOSS PRACTICES IN BOXING

By **Scott LaFee**

Twenty-nine hours before they would meet in the ring, Joey Gamache and Arturo Gatti convened with their teams for the official weigh-in – an event that remains clouded in controversy.

Gamache came in at 140¼ pounds, three-quarters of a pound under the agreed maximum for the lightweight bout at Madison Square Garden 14 years ago. Gatti weighed in – briefly – at 141 pounds.

The next night the fighters' weights weren't even remotely close. An unofficial HBO weigh-in as the boxers entered the ring put Gamache at 144 pounds and Gatti at an astounding 160 – a 16-pound difference that some observers say seemed closer to 20 or 25.

"I've fought a lot of good guys, but for the first time in my career, when Gatti took off his robe, I was shocked," Gamache would recall later. "I mean, the size, the presence that he had. I thought, 'Wait a minute, I'm fighting that guy?'"

The answer, unfortunately for Gamache, was yes. In less than two rounds, Gatti brutally pummeled Gamache into submission. Gamache was knocked down twice in the first round and knocked out in the second, resulting in permanent brain damage. It was the then-33-year-old Gamache's last professional fight.

Not long after that Feb. 26, 2000, bout, Gamache sued the New York State Athletic Commission, alleging the weigh-in had been fraudulent, that Gatti had been heavier than the mandated 141-pound limit and that the commission had been negligent in its duty to ensure a fair fight. It took more than a decade – a span during which Gatti died under mysterious circumstances – before a New York City Court of Claims judge ruled in Gamache's favor.

The tale of the Gamache-Gatti weigh-in and its consequences is indisputably dramatic, but in terms of controversy, only by degree. Except for the heavyweight division, which has no weight limit, boxing has long been ruled by the notion that a fair fight involves two contestants of roughly equal poundage. And for just as long, boxers have been trying to game the system.

Once, the weigh-in was traditionally conducted on the day of the fight, which encouraged boxers to engage in extreme measures to make the weight limit of a particular division . "Fighters try to qualify for bouts one class below their normal, natural weight because they believe it gives them an advantage," said Dr. Robert Cantu, a clinical professor of neurosurgery at Boston University's School of Medicine and vice president of the Association of Ringside Physicians (ARP). "They believe the extra weight gives them greater strength, power and stamina."

Most of these weight-reduction measures involved the radical reduction of water weight prior to weigh-in, with the unsurprising result that even with fervent efforts to rehydrate in the hours before the actual bout, many boxers entered the ring seriously dehydrated and at serious risk of injury.

In an effort to protect fighters from themselves, the rules were changed to schedule weigh-ins somewhere between 16 and 36 hours before a bout, depending upon the sanctioning organization. The idea is that in the time between official weigh-in and fight, boxers can rehydrate themselves, replacing lost water and pounds. The practice, though, remains fraught with risk. Many, if not most, boxers still try to fight at the lowest possible weight class.

Rapid, dramatic weight loss is fundamentally unhealthy, particularly for boxers who typically have little excess weight to begin with. Quick weight loss for them essentially

means reducing moisture content. A liter of sweat not replaced translates into 2.2 pounds of weight lost but at the very real risk of dehydration and a host of adverse side effects.

Most of the traditional weight-loss methods used by boxers are, at best, debatable.

Severe caloric restriction over a period of days can trigger a starvation response: The body initially consumes its fatty stores and then turns to lean tissues as a fuel source. Smart boxers rarely go to that extreme, but diminished calorie intake arguably diminishes the effectiveness of any training during the period of caloric restriction.

Some boxers compound the problem by gorging after their weigh-in, but the human body doesn't rebound immediately. A sudden, overabundance of calories can, in fact, wreak temporary havoc, altering metabolism, sugar levels and actually reducing energy levels.

More often, fighters restrict (or even eliminate) fluid intake for several days before a weigh-in or try to sweat off pounds. Both are broadly deemed unwise by health experts. From the cellular level to that of whole organs and systems, the body requires a certain amount of water to conduct its daily business. It doesn't take much to tip the scales toward dehydration and the greater the water loss, the more damaging its effects.

We are all bodies of water. Our lungs, for example, are 90 percent water; our brains 70 percent. Blood is more than 80 percent water by volume and when water levels decrease, the ability of blood to deliver oxygen is impacted, forcing the heart to work harder and boosting the risk of heart attack.

Dehydration impairs the ability to sweat, increasing the risk of overheating and heat stroke. It causes blood lactate levels to accumulate, reducing muscle resiliency. It raises the risk of kidney failure. A 2005 study in the Journal of Sports Medicine found that dehydration reduces the water volume in the cushioning, protective space between the brain and the cranium, elevating the risk of head injury.

Cantu says professional boxers and their advisors have become experts at both losing water weight and putting it back on, though the rate of rehydration varies widely by individual. Gatti apparently was good at it; Gamache not so much.

But Cantu is still no fan of the single early weigh-in. He says it unfairly favors boxers who are able to temporarily drop below their normal weight and puts boxers who fight in their natural weight class at greater risk. "These weigh-ins are all about show," he said. "They benefit promoters. They hype the fight. They don't protect the fighters."

Cantu and groups like the ARP advocate stricter monitoring of weight-loss practices and multiple weigh-ins – the first several days before a fight and the second on the day of the fight. Among the ARP's recommendations: Fighters would not be permitted to lose more than 3 percent of their normal body weight at the initial weigh-in, and would be prohibited from gaining more than 5 percent of their body weight at the second, fight-day weigh-in.

Cantu says other tests, such as a urine-specific gravity test that measures water balance and concentration, should be employed to detect dehydration before a fight.

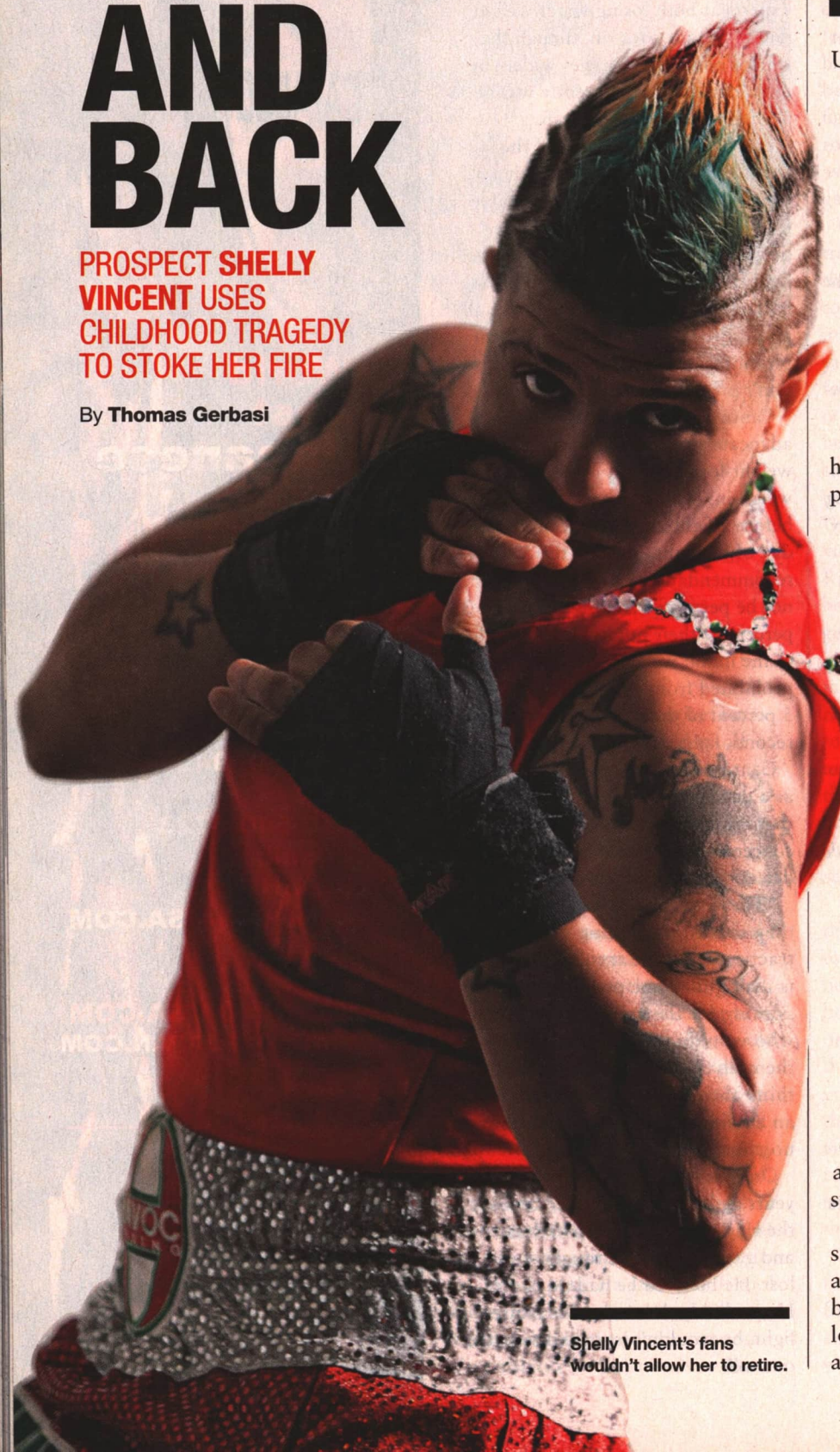
"These are not new issues, but they seem to be getting some traction lately," Cantu said. "There is dialogue. Some people are really arguing for the safety of fighters, who won't necessarily argue for themselves, either because they think the current system gives them an advantage or because they have no choice."

On that fateful February night 14 years ago, Gamache looked across the ring at the much heavier Gatti and gasped. Then he fought – and lost. He believed he had no choice. He probably didn't, but in a fairer fight, he wouldn't have had to make one. RING

TO HELL AND BACK

PROSPECT **SHELLY VINCENT** USES CHILDHOOD TRAGEDY TO STOKE HER FIRE

By **Thomas Gerbasi**



Shelly Vincent's fans wouldn't allow her to retire.

Boxing is notorious for short retirements, but this one took the cake. Unbeaten junior featherweight Shelly Vincent decided in February that she was going to walk away from the sport at the age of 34 with a ton of untapped potential.

One problem: Her fans wouldn't allow it.

"The main reason I wanted to do it was because I feel like the women don't get the respect that they deserve, especially in my area," said Vincent, who lives in Rhode Island. "I'm working just as hard as these men, and I'm putting butts in the seats."

Vincent found out just how popular she was after announcing her retirement on Facebook. Posts begged for her return, some even wondering whether her account was hacked. But it was a voice from the past that brought her back to the sport a month later.

"On my mother's deathbed she made me promise that I wouldn't stop boxing because that was what was going to save my life," said Vincent. "It was the one thing that made me happy. So the retirement thing won't work."

It also won't work because Vincent has become a beacon of hope for many kids in her area who see her as much as a survivor as a boxer.

"I had a very bad childhood," said Vincent. "I was sexually assaulted by my mother's boyfriend at the time, and I also lost my mother at a very young age. I was abused and almost

killed, so I feel like I need to be that person for these kids that I just wish that somebody would have been for me. And if somebody was there talking to me and spending some time with me and trying to point me in the right direction, I think that my life would have been a lot different."

These days, things are all right for the 122-pound prospect. Not perfect, not sunny all the time, but a lot better than they were. A lot of that – maybe all of it – has to do with boxing, the sport that was always there for her,

'I'M WORKING JUST AS HARD AS THESE MEN, AND I'M PUTTING BUTTS IN THE SEATS.'
– SHELLY VINCENT

even in her darkest hours.

"It set me free," she said. "It relieved all that tension inside me, that anger. There were times when I would cry while hitting the bag, and I just felt great after. It gave me an outlet to channel everything that was inside of me: the depression, the hurt, the anger."

But after her mother Tania died from leukemia at 37 and her grandmother passed away a year later, the 19-year-old began to go off the rails once she was out of the safe confines of the boxing gym. A promising career ultimately turned into battles with the law, two of which resulted in jail time.

"I was fighting in the street from all the stuff I was going through, and I was channeling it the wrong way," she said. "Everybody that I felt threatened by or I felt was going to hurt me or try to do something to me, I would unleash, so what happened to me when I was 13 wouldn't happen again."

Vincent eventually realized that while fighting was leading her to a dead end, boxing could rescue her. After her last jail stint, she got back to boxing, won a Golden Gloves title in 2011 and then turned pro later that year.

She hasn't looked back since, with charity work and talks to troubled teens at area schools filling the time when she's not in the gym. But that doesn't mean her fire has been turned down, especially when it comes to the topic of fellow unbeaten prospect Heather Hardy.

"I think they call her 'The Heat' because every time she sees my face she has a meltdown," said Vincent, who has been calling the New Yorker out for at least a year, but to no avail.

"We have respect for Hardy and her camp," said Vincent's manager, Mary del Pino. "It's not anything against her personally. At least not from me."

"Yeah, I don't like her," counters Vincent with a laugh.

But whether or not this New York vs. New England showdown takes place, or if a world championship is in her future, in life, Shelly Vincent has already won.

"I really feel like I lived because I'm a special person, and I'm meant to be there to save somebody," she said. "I remember when I used to want to be anybody else, and now I'm glad that I'm me. I went through hell, so I'm expecting heaven." RING

POUND FOR POUND

1. CECILIA BRAEKHUS, Norway
24-0 (7 KOs)
Welterweight

2. JELENA MRDJENOVICH, Canada
32-9-1 (16 KOS)
Featherweight

3. AVA KNIGHT, U.S.
12-2-3 (5 KOs)
Junior flyweight

4. YESICA YOLANDA BOPP, Argentina
26-1 (12 KOs),
Junior flyweight

5. JESSICA CHAVEZ, Mexico
19-3-3 (4 KOs)
Junior flyweight

6. DIANA PRAZAK, Australia
13-2 (9 KOs)
Junior lightweight

7. ERICA ANABELLA FARIAS, Argentina
19-1 (9 KOs)
Lightweight

8. MARCELA ELIANA ACUNA, Argentina
41-6-1 (18 KOs)
Junior featherweight

9. DELFINE PERSOON, Belgium
29-1 (13 KOs)
Lightweight

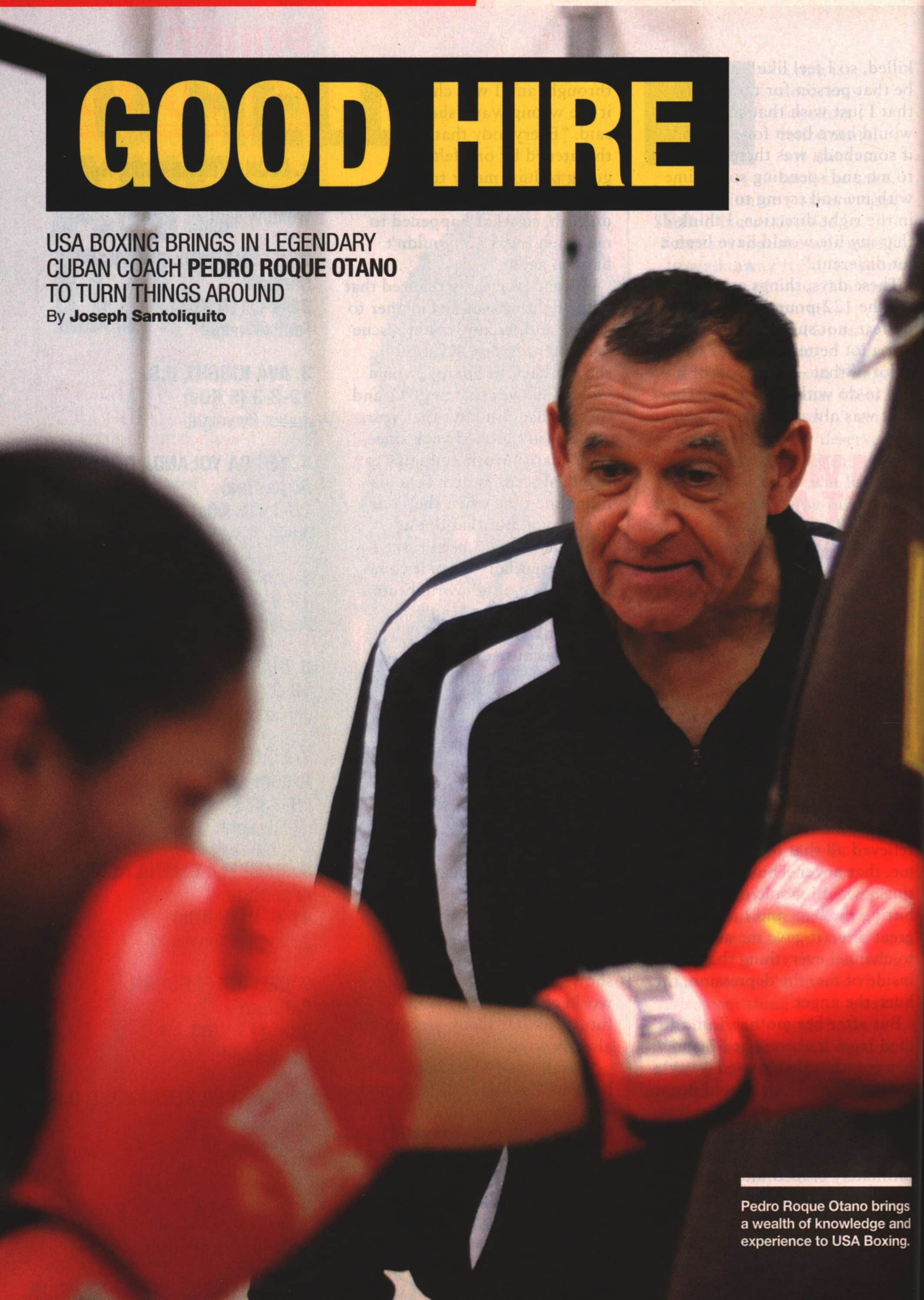
10. MELISSA HERNANDEZ, U.S.
19-5-3 (6 KOs)
Featherweight

Through fights of April 20.
Anne Sophie Mathis has been removed from the rankings due to inactivity (last fight June 1, 2013).

GOOD HIRE

USA BOXING BRINGS IN LEGENDARY CUBAN COACH **PEDRO ROQUE OTANO** TO TURN THINGS AROUND

By **Joseph Santoliquito**



Pedro Roque Otano brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to USA Boxing.

It was hard for Pedro Roque Otano to look up as he pushed his broom along the streets of Cuba. He tried not to remember his wonderful experiences, the people he met, the places he went, the glory.

It hurt too much.

Otano was the longtime coach of the decorated Cuban Olympic team, international boxing royalty. He was a fixture on the amateur boxing circuit, able to walk into almost any gym in the world and be recognized immediately.

And the authorities reduced him to a street cleaner after a falling out, a sad fate for Otano but perhaps a boon for USA Boxing. If the U.S. team has success at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics, they can quite literally say they found gold off the streets.

On Sept. 11, 2012, USA Boxing needed to make a bold move after its men's team failed to win a single medal at the 2012 Games in London. (Claressa Shields and Marlen Esparza won a gold and bronze medal, respectively, for the women.) Enter Otano, 64, who joined the team in a newly created position called "International Teaching Coach."

That title is expected to be changed soon to U.S. Olympic boxing coach.

"We are thrilled to have Pedro Roque working with USA Boxing as our International Teaching Coach," said USA Boxing Interim Executive Director Lynette Smith. "His experience and knowledge has been invaluable to all of our athletes who have been fortunate enough to work with him. And each of the junior, youth and elite boxers he has worked with have thoroughly enjoyed their time with him. His love for the sport and desire to win is infectious, and we look forward to a bright future with coach Roque guiding our athletes."

Otano coached seven Cuban Olympic teams – 1976, 1980, 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004 and 2008. His fighters have won 11 Olympic gold medals, 35 Olympic medals overall and 43 World Championships medals, perhaps making him the greatest amateur boxing coach ever.

Still, he fell out of favor with Cuban government officials, who long suspected that he encouraged Cuban fighters to defect and fight professionally in free countries, and he was removed in 2009.

"Life in Cuba has always been very difficult with the dictatorship there," Otano said through interpreter Edward Rivas, a U.S. assistant coach. "There were run-ins [with government officials] all of the time. ... I had some luck because I could have gone to prison. I was in a position to make a big scene, being identified as the best trainer in the world.

"I don't think they wanted to embarrass themselves. They embarrassed me, instead. They removed me, and I was left to clean the streets. I traveled the world, and the next thing I was doing was sweeping streets with a broom in my hands."

By 2012, Otano had had enough. He defected to the U.S. from Mexico on June 20 of that year.

"The United States has accepted me and given me political asylum. It's why I work almost 30 hours a day, so that we come out ahead. I want the U.S. to succeed," Otano said.

Otano and his staff have their work cut out. You have to go back to 2004 to find the last American Olympic gold medalist, Andre Ward, and all the way back to 1988 to find multiple U.S. gold medalists: Kennedy McKinney, Andrew Maynard and Ray Mercer.

However, in the last 14 months, U.S. boxers have won 105 medals in international competition. The goal before 2016 is to have the U.S. team compete in 20 international tournaments. For the 2012 London games, the U.S. had fighters with fewer than four international bouts.

"That's not a way to win at that level," Otano said. "I feel that's where we lost. We stopped preparing for international competitions. I heard of the politics with the U.S., but I can't speak about what went on then because I wasn't here. But when I was with the Cuban team, from being on the outside looking in during the 1960s and 1970s, we looked at the U.S. team as the best in the world.

"In 1972, Cuba won, and in '76, the U.S. won. The last couple of Olympics, we didn't win any medals. We want to change that. From my standpoint, they didn't have an organization that wasn't focused enough on the preparation part of amateur boxing to stay ahead of everyone else. That's where the U.S. team fell off."

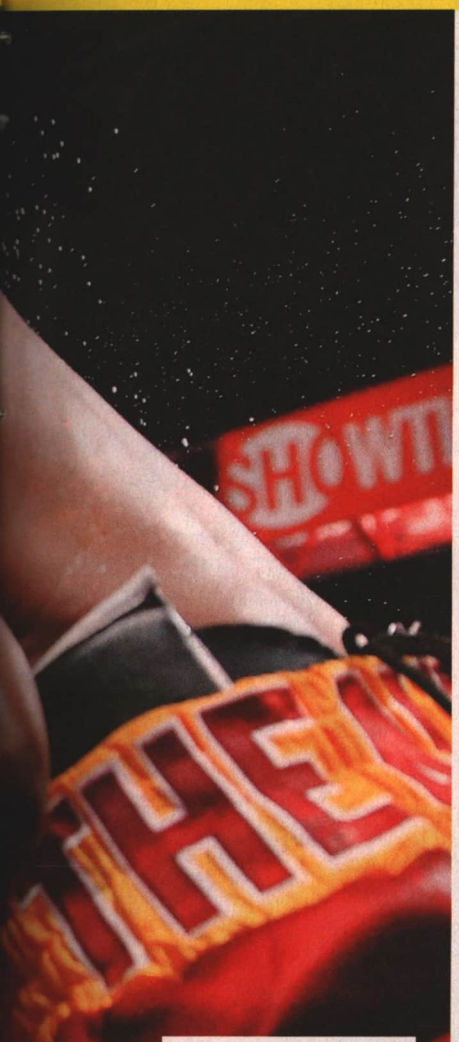
Otano has two years before the next Olympics, which gives him and other U.S. officials time to re-shape the team. Only time will tell whether the Americans' fortunes will change with the addition.

The only certain thing is that Otano couldn't be happier.

"I like talking in 'we's.'" he said. "I see myself as a proud Cuban-American now. The biggest surprise is the love and how openhearted I've been received by the U.S. program." RING

RINGSIDE REPORTS

BY NORM FRAUENHEIM



Bernard Hopkins (right and inset) gave another otherworldly performance, at least for a 49-year-old, against Beibut Shumenov.

BERNARD HOPKINS SD 12 BEIBUT SHUMENOV

Date: April 19
Site: DC Armory, Washington, D.C.
Division: Light heavyweight (for Hopkins' IBF title and Shumenov's WBA title)
Weights: Hopkins 172.4 pounds; Shumenov 174.4
RING rating (going into fight): Hopkins No. 1, Shumenov No. 4.
Network: Showtime

★ Bernard Hopkins said he went to Washington, D.C., to fight in a city full of monuments because he wanted to make some history. He did. He does. He's a monument in progress, history in the making.

It's hard to know where it will all go, or even whether it will take him past Adonis Stevenson, but Hopkins has already done the unprecedented. His decision over Beibut Shumenov is just another notch in an unfolding legend.

Despite the strangest scorecard since C.J. Ross had a seat at ringside, the 49-year-old Hopkins claimed a second piece of the light heavyweight title with a performance that represents a working definition of what the sweet science should be. It's called a cruel game. A brutal craft. But Hopkins (55-6-2, 32 KOs) reminds us that cruelty and brutality are there when a good mind isn't. Quick feet, fast hands and power are critical, yet aren't much good without agile thinking.

That helps explain Hopkins' ability to fight on at an age when most athletes are living off investments and endorsements. Michael Jordan, maybe the greatest athlete in the Hopkins generation, retired at 40. Hopkins has fought for nearly a decade since then. He credits his longevity to a lifestyle that might include a slice of cheesecake a few times a year. But it's more than that. It's about thinking through every moment of every round in a sport often dismissed as moronic.

Against Shumenov, his mental acuity was never more evident. Shumenov's sparse record (14-2, 9 KOs) made it hard to get a good read on the Kazakhstani. But his Olympic pedigree and a college education indicated he might have the smarts to deal with Hopkins. In a contest of wits, however, Shumenov was checkmated at every turn and in every corner.

"He was really surprised at the way I can stand there and let him miss," said Hopkins, a 116-111 winner on two scorecards and a 114-113 loser on judge Gustavo Padilla's bizarre card. "I disarmed his right. I kept my shoulder up with a roll, so that when he threw the right, it gives him the delusion he can hit me."

By the 11th round, Shumenov looked confused. He dropped both hands, almost in a gesture that said he didn't know what else to do. Hopkins capitalized, landing a left and then a right that dropped Shumenov to one knee. If there had been any doubts before then, there were none now. Padilla must not have been watching.

After the victory, Hopkins mentioned Stevenson, THE RING's champion, is his next target in a quest to unify the title. He even talked about Floyd Mayweather Jr. in a fight he called 50-50.

"He gets 50 wins, I turn 50," Hopkins told ringside reporters. "That'd be huge at 165, 170 pounds."

That sounds like a stretch. Then again, Hopkins' monumental career says, time and again, that nothing ever is. ★

SHAWN PORTER TKO 4 PAULIE MALIGNAGGI

Date: April 19
Site: DC Armory, Washington, D.C.
Division: Welterweight (for Porter's IBF title)
Weights: Porter 146.8 pounds; Malignaggi 146.2
RING rating (going into fight): Porter No. 6; Malignaggi No. 8.
Network: Showtime

★ Paulie Malignaggi's career might have ended not far from where another will resume.

Shawn Porter put Malignaggi there, through the ropes and close to a seat he occupies as a budding ringside analyst for Showtime, with a fourth-round stoppage as overwhelming as it was stunning.

There weren't many words for it. Not even Malignaggi, who is never short for words, knew how to exactly describe it. Then again, he might not have remembered much of what was a blitz from the stronger Porter (24-0-1, 15 KOs).

"I'm not sure what I'm going to do," the 33-year Malignaggi (33-6, 7 KOs) told Showtime colleagues when asked if he would retire. "I don't want to lose to an average champion. I want to lose to a great champion … so if this is my last fight, I hope I lost to a great champion."

It's hard to know whether Porter, 26, has the stuff to be great, especially in a weight class that includes Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao. In time, we'll see. His next date might be against U.K. welterweight Kell Brook, who is the mandatory challenger for Porter's acronym-sanctioned version of the 147-pound title.

But in overpowering Malignaggi, Porter showed he's a threat to anybody who already thinks of himself as great. Translation: He's probably a fighter the marquee names will avoid until he proves he can be a major draw.

Porter figured to have a tough time against Malignaggi, who wasn't nicknamed the Magic Man because he's tricky with a deck of cards. It was thought that Malignaggi's skillset was slick and thorough enough to score, especially against Porter, who had been easy to hit. But the problem with that thinking was Malignaggi's own power, or the absence of it.

Seconds after opening bell, it was evident that Malignaggi could do nothing to keep Porter off of him. What's more, Porter knew it.

In the first round, Porter's jab opened up a cut under Malignaggi's left eye. In the second, a two-handed succession of Porter blows staggered Malignaggi. He survived the round, but barely. In the third, Porter landed one overhand right after another.

It was only a matter of time, and that inevitability struck like a force of nature midway through the fourth.

First, a devastating right dropped Malignaggi, leaving the former two-division champion dazed. It could have ended there. But referee Sam Williams let it continue. Porter wasted no time, unleashing a wave of punches that sent a helpless Malignaggi through the ropes onto the ring's apron. At 1:14 of the round, Williams waved it off without a count.

"I told him to go and be great," said Malignaggi, who spoke to Porter before he went to the emergency room as a precautionary measure.

That's a ringside analysis Porter would love to hear one day. ★

Shawn Porter (right) made a strong statement by overwhelming Paulie Malignaggi.

PETER QUILLIN
UD 12
LUKAS KONECNY

Date: April 19
Site: DC Armory, Washington, D.C.
Division: Middleweight (for Quillin's WBO title)
Weights: Quillin 159.8 pounds; Konecny 158.25
RING rating (going into fight): Quillin No. 4; Konecny not rated.
Network: Showtime

★ Peter Quillin didn't get the stoppage he promised. But a victory over Lukas Konecny won him a few minutes on the bully pulpit. It was a way station, a way to talk about Gennady Golovkin, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., Sergio Martinez and Miguel Cotto. Danny Jacobs looks more likely.

But Quillin made even Jacobs sound like a way station on his path to bigger things.

"I will go back home and watch the tape and see what else I need to do," Quillin said after nearly throwing a shutout – 119-109, 120-108, 119-109 – on the scorecards against Konecny, a Czech fighting for the first time in the United States. "I was looking for a knockout, but it didn't happen. If Danny Jacobs is next, let's do it. I'm also interested in fighting the winner of Sergio Martinez and Miguel Cotto, or Julio Cesar Chavez [Jr.] and Gennady Golovkin."

His chances of meeting the Cotto-Martinez winner on June 7 or the proposed Chavez-Golovkin fight would probably be slim in large part because of the escalating Golden Boy-Top Rank promotional feud.

For now, the Golden Boy-promoted Jacobs looks to be Quillin's likely foe in another Showtime bout projected to happen sometime this summer. It's no coincidence that Jacobs was at ringside, working as a television analyst during Quillin's third defense of his slice of the 160-pound championship.

The ambitious Quillin made Jacobs sound a little bit like Konecny in post-fight interviews. That might come back to haunt him. Konecny, untested and unknown, was an opportunity for Quillin to get another win, another paycheck and another chance to further his agenda. Quillin did what he had to in workmanlike fashion. But Jacobs figures to put up more resistance.

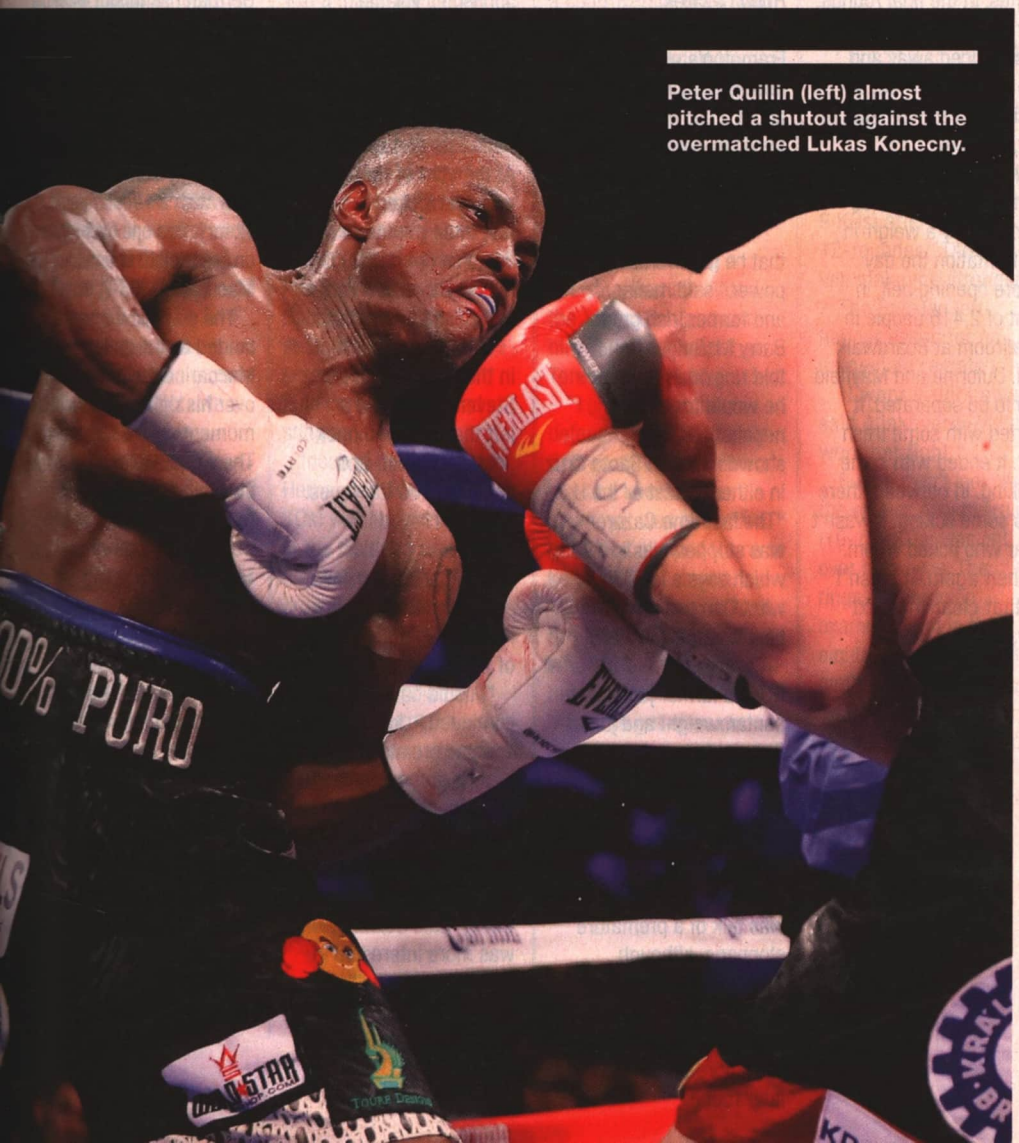
"There was nothing that I didn't expect," Konecny said. "I would have expected a harder fight. Quillin is a good champion and a good fighter, but not a great one."

Mostly, Quillin (31-0, 22 KOs), who yelled at Jacobs after the fourth round, outworked Konecny (50-5, 23 KOs). According to CompuBox, Quillin landed more than twice the number of punches. It was 403 for Quillin and 197 for Konecny, who sustained a bloody nose in the eighth and a cut above his right eye in the 10th.

In the first round alone, the ringside computer had Quillin landing 32 punches to six from Konecny. A heavy bag lands more in three minutes than Konecny did. It's no wonder that a restless crowd at the DC Armory began to boo in the later rounds. The 12-round bout was about as dreary as a day in Congress.

"He was a tough customer and came to fight, and that's what the fans want to see," Quillin said.

Actually, fans wanted to see a lot more from Quillin. Against Jacobs, maybe they will. ★



Peter Quillin (left) almost pitched a shutout against the overmatched Lukas Konecny.

NO. 2 SERGEY KOVALEV KO 7 CEDRIC AGNEW

March 29, Atlantic City, N.J. (HBO)

★ It might be wise to avoid Sergey Kovalev if you're Adonis Stevenson or Bernard Hopkins. But it's hard to ignore him. Kovalev demolished Cedric Agnew to retain his version of the light heavyweight crown. That was predictable. The real victory came when HBO announced that more than a million had watched the seventh-round knockout.

It's an indication that a fight with Kovalev would make sense and dollars. Whether that matters in an era of promotional feuds is another story altogether.

"That's not my job," Kovalev (24-0-1, 22 KO) said after flooring Agnew (26-1, 13 KO) three times and knocking him out with a pair of lefts – one to the body and one to the head – at 58 seconds of the round. "I don't want an easy fight. Only tough fights."

He and fans had hoped for one against Stevenson. But Stevenson jumped ship, signing with Showtime.

"A piece of (bleep)," said Kovalev, who might as well have been talking about a business where the biggest fights are the ones that don't get made.

THOMAS DULORME UD 10 KARIM MAYFIELD

March 29, Atlantic City, N.J. (HBO)

★ The fight wasn't as good as the weigh-in.

Thomas Dulorme, who is trying to turn himself into a 140-pound contender, outworked Karim Mayfield in the early rounds. He clinched in the mid-rounds. In the final rounds, a tiring Dulorme (21-1, 14 KOs) danced away and into a 98-92, 97-93, 96-94 decision over Mayfield (18-1-1, 11 KOs).

The 10-round junior welterweight bout was preceded by a weigh-in confrontation the day before opening bell, in front of 2,416 people in a ballroom at Boardwalk Hall. Dulorme and Mayfield had to be separated. It started with some trash talk. It ended with some choking. In between, there was some licking. It wasn't clear who licked whom.

Then again, it wasn't all that clear the next day, either.

NO. 1 CARL FRAMPTON KO 2 HUGO CAZARES

April 4, Belfast, Northern Ireland (BoxNation)

★ Momentum for one of the biggest fights in junior featherweight history continued to build, thanks to Carl Frampton's dynamic performance in a swift stoppage of former two-division champion Hugo Cazares.

The buzz over Frampton's victory immediately led to talk about a showdown with Mexican-American Leo Santa Cruz, ranked No. 2 by THE RING.

"Carl has shown again that he has world-class power," said manager and former Irish great Barry McGuigan, who told ringside reporters he would try to open negotiations for a showdown with Santa Cruz in either Belfast or the U.S. "The last time Cazares was stopped was in 1999, which says a lot. This is what Carl can do to the best fighters."

Cazares (40-8-2, 27 KOs), a former junior bantamweight and junior flyweight champion, was dropped by a sweeping left from Frampton (18-0, 13 KOs) at 1:38 of the second. Cazares tried to beat the referee's count. There was talk of a premature stoppage, although Frampton's power and strength might have produced the same result with more punishment in a later round.

NO. 8 CURTIS STEVENS TKO 10 TUREANO JOHNSON

April 4, Philadelphia (NBC Sports)

★ Curtis Stevens' power landed late, yet still in time to save the middleweight from defeat with a stoppage that was booed by many and condemned by Tureano Johnson's volatile promoter, Gary Shaw.

A fearless Johnson outworked Stevens (27-4, 20 KOs) in the early moments of each round. At the start of the 10th, an upset looked to be just three minutes away. Johnson (14-1, 10 KOs) led 89-82 on two cards and 87-84 on the third.

With a minute left in the fight, however, Stevens uncorked a left that snapped back Johnson's head and sent him into the ropes. Stevens moved in with a flurry against a seemingly defenseless Johnson. Referee Gary Rosato ended it at 2:09 of the round.

"I could have continued," Johnson said.

Shaw promised a protest and demanded a rematch. But Stevens had no interest in a second encounter.

"I got him out of there," said Stevens, who was more interested in fighting Peter Quillin or James Kirkland. "I did what I was supposed to."

NO. 5 JUERGEN BRAEHMER TKO 5 ENZO MACCARINELLI

April 5, Rostock, Germany (BoxNation)

★ If Juergen Braehmer stood alongside Bernard Hopkins, Adonis Stevenson and Sergey Kovalev, he might go unnoticed. Outside of Germany, Braehmer is the light heavyweight few know. In part, that's because the German has fought 44 of his 45 fights in his home country.

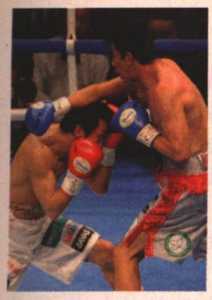
But it's getting harder to ignore the 35-year-old Braehmer (43-2, 32 KOs), unbeaten since 2008 and seemingly better than ever with a 12th straight victory, this one over former cruiserweight champion Enzo Maccarinelli (38-7, 30 KOs).

The southpaw Braehmer landed a straight left that left Maccarinelli with a bad bruise over his right eye in the final moments of the first round. The wound quickly got worse: swelling from problematic to grotesque. After the fifth, trainer Gary Lockett saw that Maccarinelli couldn't see at all. He threw in the towel.

"Truth is, I couldn't see anything after the first round," Maccarinelli told reporters at ringside.

A couple of weeks later, however, the swelling had subsided. No serious damage to the eye was found, according to German media, which also reported that 3 million Germans watched the telecast. With those kind of numbers, it's easy to see a potential rematch.

INQUE: REUTERS; BELTRAN: DR. ED DE LA VEGA, DDS; VARGAS: JEFF GROSS/GETTY IMAGES



C AKIRA YAEGASHI KO 9 ODILON ZALETA

April 6, Tokyo (Fuji TV)

★ The fight was merely a tease, a hint at what could be the biggest bout in the smallest divisions since the Michael Carbajal-Humberto Gonzalez trilogy.

Another Lord of the Flies confrontation, Akira Yaegashi-Roman Gonzalez, looked to be closer to reality after Yaegashi's ninth-round stoppage of overmatched Mexican Odilon Zaleta.

Yaegashi (20-3, 10 KOs), THE RING and WBC flyweight champion, did the expected, finishing Zaleta (15-4, 8 KOs) with a big right hand at 2:14 of the ninth round.

The real news came after the predictable victory. Gonzalez, unbeaten (39-0, 33 KOs) after a third-round stoppage of Filipino Juan Purisma and rated No. 1 at 112 pounds by THE RING, stepped through ropes to congratulate Yaegashi. He raised Yaegashi's hand in victory.

"Can I fight him?" Gonzalez then asked the crowd.

Dumb question. Of course he can. The crowd just wants to know when.

NO. 9 NAOYA INOUE TKO 6 NO. 4 ADRIAN HERNANDEZ

April 6, Tokyo (Fuji TV)

★ There's nothing big about Naoya Inoue. He weighs 108 pounds. He has only six pro fights. Yet, his name looms large in Japanese history.

The 20-year-old junior flyweight became the first Japanese boxer to ever win a major title in only his sixth bout with a stunning sixth-round technical knockout of Adrian Hernandez, who answered the opening bell with 32 fights on his resume.

The assumption was that Hernandez would test Inoue, perhaps even make him look like an amateur. Bad guess. The designated student overwhelmed the presumed teacher with fluid combinations and stinging precision.

Inoue (6-0, 5 KOs) cut Hernandez (29-3-1, 18 KOs) with a right hook in the third. He dropped him in the sixth with a crushing overhand right. Hernandez, of Mexico, got to his feet. At 2:54 of the round, however, Hernandez turned his back in an act of surrender and a sign that Inoue is more prodigy than student.

NO. 4 RAYMUNDO BELTRAN UD 12 ARASH USMANEE

April 12, MGM Grand, Las Vegas (HBO)

★ Raymundo Beltran was weary of the anger. It stalked him, pushed him into a lousy mood with an emotional beatdown every time he thought back to September of last year and a controversial draw with Ricky Burns in Scotland.

Beltran needed to beat up somebody other than himself.

Beltran (29-6-1, 17 KOs) got that opportunity against a late stand-in, Arash Usmanee (20-2-1, 10 KOs), scoring a decision that alleviated the frustration and put him in line for a shot at Terence Crawford.

"I should have been defending that title," said Beltran, who broke Burns' jaw and knocked him down, yet was left with a draw that allowed Burns to keep the WBO crown.

Burns went on to lose the title to Crawford, who expects to defend it this summer.

Beltran got closer to claiming what he thought was his all along with a 117-111, 118-110, 117-111 victory over the unknown Usmanee.

JESSIE VARGAS UD 12 NO. 7 KHABIB ALLAKHVERDIEV

April 12, MGM Grand, Las Vegas (HBO)

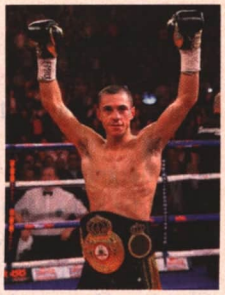
★ Jessie Vargas did most of the damage and got most of the points. It wasn't easy. It also wasn't clear cut, at least not in the battered eyes of Khabib Allakhverdiev. But it was enough for Vargas to win a 115-113, 117-111, 115-113 decision.

"I thought I should have been busier earlier, but I got stronger and I thought I took control," said Vargas (24-0, 9 KOs) after his first 12-rounder. "This one will make me stronger."

The Russian left-hander asked for an immediate rematch.

"I want it right away," said Allakhverdiev. "I won that fight."

But he didn't look like the winner. Allakhverdiev (19-1, 9 KOs) was cut over both eyes. The ringside physician examined him in the eighth and again in the ninth. He rocked Vargas repeatedly in the 12th, but not often enough to convince the judges.



NO. 6 SCOTT QUIGG TKO 2 TSHIFHIWA MUNYAI

April 19, Manchester, England (Sky Sports 2)

★ Scott Quigg did what he had to. Said what he had to.

Quigg kept himself in line for a possible shot at Leo Santa Cruz with a predictable stoppage of Tshifhiwa Munyai, who was a late stand-in for Nehomar Cermeno, a Venezuelan who pulled out of the junior featherweight bout because he was unable to acquire a U.K. visa.

Quigg (28-0-2, 21 KOs) also called out Northern Ireland's Carl Frampton, who had put himself at the front of the Santa Cruz line with an April 4 stoppage of Hugo Cazares in Belfast.

Quigg's performance against Munyai (24-3-1, 12 KOs) kept his best options intact. He dropped the South African with a left hook in the first round. He dropped him with a right hook in the second. He followed that up with a succession of undefended blows. That's when referee Howard Foster stepped in, stopping it at 1:56 of the round.

"I wanted to make a statement," Quigg told Sky Sports.

Turns out, he made a couple of them.

KOVALEV: AP; FRAMPTON: JASON CAIRNDUFF/ACTION IMAGES; STEVENS: DARRYL COBB; IB: YAEGASHI: MASASHI HARA/GETTY IMAGES; INOUE: REUTERS; BELTRAN: DR. ED DE LA VEGA; DNS: VARGAS: JEFF GROSS/GETTY IMAGES

FIGHT RESULTS

THROUGH FIGHTS OF APRIL 20 (CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER)

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Tony Thompson SD 12 Odlanier Solis
Evgeny Orlov TKO 9 Okello Peter
Jason Bergman TKO 3 Devin Vargas
Luis Ortiz KO 4 Monte Barrett
Gerald Washington KO 2 Skipp Scott
Steve Cunningham UD 10 Amir Mansour
Christian Hammer UD 10 Konstantin Airich
Shannon Briggs KO 1 Maurenzo Smith
Manuel Charr UD 10 Kevin Johnson
Charles Martin KO 4 Alexander Flores
Shannon Briggs KO 1 Francisco Mireles

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Victor Ramirez TKO 4 Glendy Hernandez
Stivens Bujaj TKO 7 Victor Barragan
Dmitry Kudryashov TKO 2 Lubos Suda
Bilal Laggoune KO 2 Laszlo Hubert
Damir Beljo TKO 7 Epifanio Mendoza
Matty Askin TKO 9 Menay Edwards
Jon-Lewis Dickinson TKO 10 Neil Dawson
David Aloua KO 4 Brad Pitt
Ovill McKenzie KO 5 Tony Conquest
Yunier Dorticos KO 4 Eric Fields
Al Sands TKO 9 Keith Barr

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Matamba Debatch Postolo TKO 4 Mada Maugo
Travis Dickinson TKO 3 Danny McIntosh
Dominic Boesel MD 10 Miguel Velozo
Robin Krasniqi KO 7 Emmanuel Danso
Sergey Kovalev KO 7 Cedric Agnew
Juergen Braehmer TKO 5 Enzo Maccarinelli
Erik Skoglund TKO 9 Danilo D'Agata
Sean Monaghan TKO 5 Joe McCreedy
Bernard Hopkins SD 12 Beibut Shumenov

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Christopher Rebrasse TKO 4 Mouhamed Ali Ndiaye
Fedor Chudinov TKO 5 Stjepan Bozic
Tyron Zeuge TKO 9 Gheorghe Sabau
Gilberto Ramirez Sanchez TKO 5 Giovanni Lorenzo
Sergey Khomitsky TKO 6 Frank Buglioni
Hassan N'Dam N'Jikam UD 10 Fulgencio Zuniga

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Curtis Stevens TKO 10 Tureano Johnson
Eamonn O'Kane KO 1 Alvaro Gaona
Marco Antonio Rubio KO 10 Domenico Spada
Marcos Reyes TKO 2 Idiozan Matos
Danny Butler TKO 4 Martin Concepcion
John Ryder TKO 9 Jez Wilson
Abraham Han TKO 2 Juan Carlos Candelo
Peter Quillin UD 12 Lukas Konecny

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Vanes Martirosyan UD 10 Mario Alberto Lozano
Jorge Melendez UD 10 Richard Gutierrez
Lenny Bottai SD 12 Ismael El Massoudi
Sasha Yengoyan UD 10 Ayoub Nefzi
Orlando Fiordigiglio KO 7 Ruben Varon
Jack Culcay UD 12 Salim Larbi
Joshua Clottey UD 12 Anthony Mundine
(F) Paola Casalinuovo TKO 7 Yajaira Hernandez
Zaurbek Baysangurov TKO 12 Guido Pitto
Charles Hatley TKO 5 Jose Flores
Javier Maciel UD 10 Cesar Silva

WELTERWEIGHTS

Suyon Takayama UD 10 Tetsuya Suzuki
Jeff Horn TKO 9 Rivan Cesaire
Jose Luis Castillo TKO 5 Felix Bojorquez
(F) Ivana Habazin SD 10 Sabrina Giuliani
Vivian Harris MD 10 Jorge Paez Jr.
Victor Velazquez UD 10 Sebastian Lujan
Antonin Decarie UD 10 Pablo Munguia
Frankie Gavin UD 12 Sacky Shikukutu
Luis Abregu TKO 8 Jean Carlos Prada
Yoshihiro Kamegai KO 4 Jung-Hoon Yang
Edwin Palacios KO 10 Michael Mora
Shayne Singleton UD 10 Laszlo Fazekas
Silverio Ortiz TKO 8 Ivan Pereyra
Bradley Skeete TKO 7 Tobia Loriga
Manny Pacquiao UD 12 Timothy Bradley
Chris van Heerden SD 10 Ray Narh
David Avanesyan UD 12 Kaizer Mabuza
Alan Sanchez TKO 6 Jorge Silva
Sadam Ali KO 1 Michael Clark
Shawn Porter TKO 4 Paulie Malignaggi

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Humberto Soto UD 10 Juan Carlos Abreu
Jairo Lopez KO 2 Jonel Gadapan
Thomas Dulorme UD 10 Karim Mayfield
Leonardo Zappavigna TKO 10 Shuhei Tsuchiya
Juan Manuel Witt KO 2 Benjamin Cantero
Jason Pagara KO 7 Rusmin Kie Raha
Roberto Ortiz TKO 5 Ramiro Alcaraz
Jessie Vargas UD 12 Khabib Allakhverdiev
Keita Obara KO 4 Jay Solmiano
Aik Shakhnazaryan UD 12 Felix Lora
Tyrone Nurse UD 10 Tyler Goodjohn

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Anthony Peterson UD 10 Marcos Jimenez
Reynaldo Ojeda TKO 3 Fernando Torres
Joebert Delos Reyes KO 5 Valentine Borg
(F) Maria Maderna TKO 3 Dalia Vasarhelyi
Stephen Ormond TKO 5 Karim El Ouazghari
Raymundo Beltran UD 12 Arash Usmanee
Rod Salka UD 10 Alexei Collado
Anthony Crolla TKO 10 John Murray
(F) Delfine Persoon UD 10 Erica Anabella Farias

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Michael Farenas TKO 2 Hector Velazquez
Edgar Gabejan KO 10 Weng Haya
Jose Pedraza UD 12 Alberto Garza
Pharanpetch Tor Buamas UD 12 Rey Las Pinas
Raul Centeno UD 10 Diego Chaves
(F) Ramona Kuehne TKO 6 Gina Chamie
Juan Jose Martinez UD 12 Carlos Jimenez
Adrian Estrella KO 3 Balweg Bangoyan
Juan Carlos Martinez SD 10 Alejandro Perez
Edgar Monarrez KO 7 Juan Montes
Terdsak Kokietgym UD 12 Rene Bestudio
Bryan Vasquez UD 12 Jose Felix Jr.
Mark Melligen KO 5 Bualuang OnesongchaiGym

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Eric Hunter UD 10 Yenifel Vicente
Hisashi Amagasa TKO 8 Vinvin Rufino
Satoshi Hosono TKO 10 Yuki Ogata
Chonlatarn Piriyapinyo KO 6 Nouldy Manakane
Ronny Rios UD 10 Andrew Cancio
Josh Warrington TKO 7 Rendall Munroe
Gamalier Rodriguez UD 10 Orlando Cruz

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Kid Galahad UD 12 Sergio Prado
Hidenori Otake UD 10 Takafumi Nakajima
(F) Marcela Eliana Acuna TKO 6 Estrella Valverde
Qiu Xiao Jun UD 12 Jonathan Baat
Arturo Santos Reyes SD 10 Julio Cesar Miranda
Carl Frampton KO 2 Hugo Cazares
Juan Alberto Rosas TD 9 Alejandro Gonzalez Jr.
Rafael Vazquez KO 5 Manuel Herrera
Tyson Cave UD 10 Sebastien Gauthier
Albert Pagara TKO 3 Skak Max
Scott Quigg TKO 2 Tshifhiwa Munyai

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Antonio Tostado Garcia MD 10 Jonathan Vidal
Hugo Ruiz TKO 1 Ramon Maas
Anselmo Moreno UD 12 Javier Chacon
Ryosuke Iwasa MD 12 Richard Pumicpic
Ryo Akaho KO 2 Richard Garcia
Monico Laurente TD 5 Jetro Pabustan
Duke Micah KO 3 Ekow Wilson
Alejandro Hernandez KO 5 Marvin Mabait
Stuart Hall D 2 Martin Ward
Randy Caballero TKO 8 Kohei Oba
Marlon Tapales TD 5 Hayato Kimura
Kentaro Masuda TD 10 Yu Kawaguchi
Rusalee Samor UD 12 Espinos Sabu

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Giovanni Escaner KO 7 Jaymart Toyco
Sonny Boy Jaro TKO 1 Jovel Romasasa
Kohei Kono KO 8 Denkaosan Kaovichit
Oleydong Sithsamerchai KO 2 Kompetch Twins Gym
(F) Debora Dionicius TKO 4 Neisi Torres
Chatpetch Sithmorseng KO 2 Dicky Amtiran
Jamie Conlan TKO 7 Benjamin Smoes
Giovani Segura TKO 10 Felipe Salguero
Bruno Escalante UD 10 Victor Ruiz
Ivan Morales UD 10 Jose Alfredo Tirado
Yohei Tobe TKO 9 Taiki Eto

FLYWEIGHTS

Juan Carlos Reveco KO 2 Manuel Vides
Brian Viloria UD 10 Juan Herrera
Makazole Tete UD 12 Doctor Ntsele
Joebert Alvarez UD 12 Julian Rivera
Herald Molina SD 10 Nerys Espinoza
Akira Yaegashi KO 9 Odilon Zaleta
Roman Gonzalez TKO 3 Juan Purisima
Nawaphon Por Chokchai KO 3 Michael Landero
Juan Alejo TKO 9 Alberto Arias
Suguru Muranaka TKO 10 Masayuki Kuroda
(F) Gabriela Bouvier UD 10 Carolina Alvarez

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Jonathan Taconing TKO 11 Vergilio Silvano
Randy Petalcorin TKO 2 Samransak Singmanasak
Naoya Inoue TKO 6 Adrian Hernandez

STRAWWEIGHTS

Francisco Rodriguez Jr. TKO 10 Merlito Sabillo
Carlos Ortega UD 10 Gilberto Pedroza
Leroy Estrada UD 10 Edwin Diaz
Knockout CP Freshmart UD 10 Jonathan Refugio
Wanheng Menayothin UD 6 Heri Amol
Ryuji Hara MD 12 Donny Mabao
(F) Anabel Ortiz UD 10 Ivoon Rosas

PREDICTIONS ARE MADE BY RING STAFF MEMBERS MICHAEL ROSENTHAL, DOUG FISCHER AND LEM SATTERFIELD.

MAY

Carl Froch (left) and George Groves are expected to fill cavernous Wembley Stadium on May 31.

CARL FROCH VS. GEORGE GROVES II

May 31, Wembley Stadium, London

Division: Super middleweights (for Froch's IBF and WBA titles)

TV: HBO (Sky Box Office in U.K.)

Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★

Significance: The fight is expected to draw a mind-boggling 80,000 spectators, a testament to the drama of their first fight. Froch was hurt and struggled early but rallied to score a ninth-round TKO. Many – including Groves – believe it was stopped too soon. This will be fun.

Prediction: Rosenthal – Froch KO 7; Fischer – Froch TKO 8; Satterfield – Froch SD

MAY 24 – Adonis Stevenson vs. Andrzej Fonfara, light heavyweights (for Stevenson's RING and WBC titles), Montreal (Showtime)

MAY 24 – Bryant Jennings vs. Mike Perez, heavyweights, Corpus Christi, Texas (HBO)

MAY 24 – Daniel Geale vs. Matthew Macklin, middleweights, Corpus Christi, Texas (HBO)

MAY 24 – Jhonny Gonzalez vs. Clive Atwell, featherweights (for Gonzalez's WBC title), Acapulco, Mexico

MAY 31 – Felix Sturm vs. Sam Soliman, middleweights (for Sturm's IBF title), Krefeld, Germany

MAY 31 – Simpiwe Vetyeka vs. Nonito Donaire, featherweights (for Vetyeka's WBA title), Macau, China (HBO2)

MAY 31 – Nicholas Walters vs. Vic Darchinyan, featherweights, Macau, China (HBO2)

MAY 31 – Evgeny Gradovich vs. Alexander Miskirtchian, featherweights (for Gradovich's IBF title), Macau, China (HBO2)

MAY 31 – Srisaket Sor Rungvisai vs. Carlos Cuadras, junior bantamweights (for Rungvisai's WBC title), Mexico City

JUNE

SERGIO MARTINEZ VS. MIGUEL COTTO

June 7, Madison Square Garden, New York City

Division: Middleweights (for Martinez's RING and WBC titles)

TV: HBO Pay Per View

Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★

Also fighting: Marvin Sonsona vs. Wilfredo Vazquez Jr., junior featherweights

Significance: If the 39-year-old Martinez (51-2-2, 28 KOs) is the broken-down old man he appeared to be in his last fight, this could be his swan song. If he's healthy after a year-long layoff, his speed and size advantages could overwhelm the also-aging Cotto (38-4, 31 KOs).

Prediction: Rosenthal – Martinez KO 9; Fischer – Martinez TKO 11; Satterfield – Martinez KO 9

RUSLAN PROVODNIKOV VS. CHRIS ALGIERI

June 14, Barclays Center, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Division: Junior welterweights (for Provodnikov's WBO title)

TV: HBO

Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★

Also fighting: Demetrius Andrade vs. Brian Rose, junior middleweights (for Andrade's WBO title)

Significance: The all-action Provodnikov (23-2, 16 KOs) became a significant attraction after two fights in 2013, a wild loss to Tim Bradley and a title-winning victory over Mike Alvarado. Algieri (19-0, 8 KOs) is a former kickboxer with solid skills but has never tangled with the likes of Provodnikov.

Prediction: Rosenthal – Provodnikov KO 7; Fischer – Provodnikov KO 10; Satterfield – Provodnikov UD

VASYL LOMACHENKO VS. GARY RUSSELL JR.

June 21, Los Angeles

Division: Featherweights (for the vacant WBO title)

TV: Showtime

Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★

Significance: Two such gifted young fighters rarely, if ever take the risk of fighting one another so early in their careers these days. Lomachenko (1-1, according to boxrec.com) was impressive in his loss to Orlando Salido. We've been waiting for Russell (24-0, 14 KOs) to step up.

Prediction: Rosenthal – Russell UD; Fischer – Lomachenko UD; Satterfield – Russell SD

JUNE 6 – Hugo Centeno Jr. vs. Nick Brinson, middleweights, Verona, N.Y. (Showtime)

JUNE 7 – Richar Abril vs. Eduard Troyanovsky, lightweights (for Abril's WBA title), Moscow

JUNE 21 – Anatoliy Dudchenko vs. Nadjib Mohammedi, light heavyweights, Wilkes-Barre, Pa. (NBC Sports Net)

JULY

CANELO ALVAREZ VS. ERISLANDY LARA

July 12, MGM Grand, Las Vegas

Division: Junior middleweights

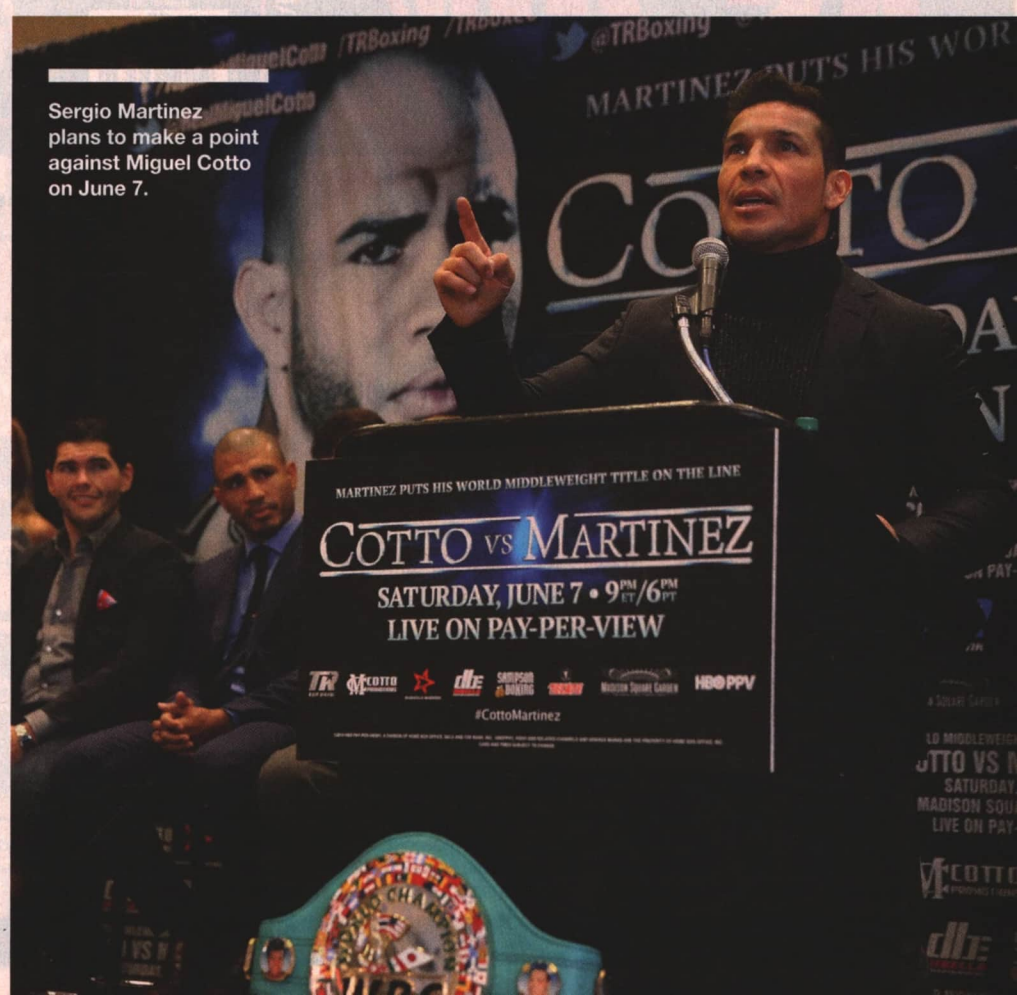
TV: Showtime Pay Per View

Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★

Significance: No one can say Alvarez (43-1-1, 31 KOs) is facing a pushover. The Mexican bounced back from his loss to Floyd Mayweather Jr. by stopping the tough Alfredo Angulo but faces a stiff test against Lara (19-1-2, 12 KOs), who has the ability and experience to give anyone trouble.

Prediction: Rosenthal – Alvarez UD; Fischer – Alvarez UD; Satterfield – Alvarez SD

JULY 26 – Tyson Fury vs. Dereck Chisora II, heavyweights, Manchester, England



Sergio Martinez plans to make a point against Miguel Cotto on June 7.

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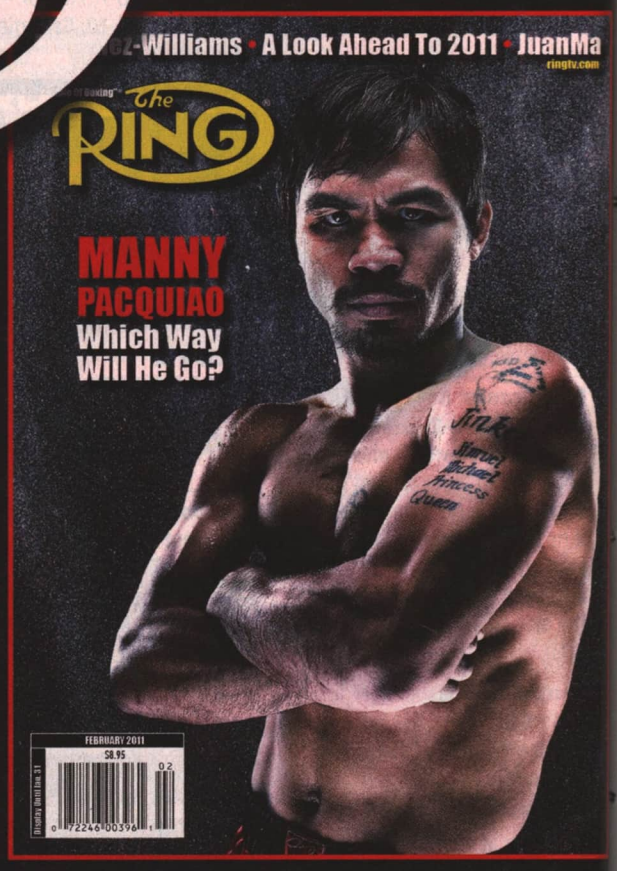

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— BOC Member José Chegüi Torres

the RING ARCHIVE

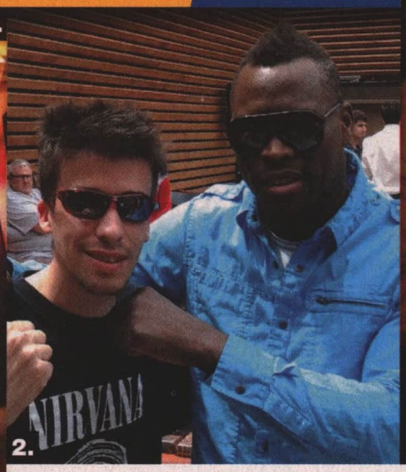
RAPT ATTENTION

Jack Dempsey was a national icon around the time this photo was taken, believed to be during his championship reign in the 1920s. That might explain why this fortunate group of society boys from New York seem to be mesmerized as the great heavyweight explains how to hit a speed bag. Dempsey gained wide fame when he pummeled Jess Willard en route to a third-round knockout in 1919 to win the heavyweight title, which at that time was the greatest prize in sports. Subsequent victories over Georges Carpentier, Luis Angel Firpo and others before massive crowds sealed his position as one the sports' great legends. Dempsey, softened by his wealth and a comfortable life, lost the championship to clever Gene Tunney in 1926 and then came up short again in a rematch the following year. However, he remains a seminal figure in boxing lore. Jack Dempsey will never be forgotten.

Corona Extra BOXING

AT THE FIGHTS

1.



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1. Nathan Whyte is flanked by Nonito Donaire (left) and Zab Judah at the Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Canelo Alvarez card last September at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. **2.** Francois Schoeters (left) with Adonis Stevenson in Montreal the day after he became RING light heavyweight champion by stopping Chad Dawson. **3.** Karina McCloud with Thomas Dulorme at the Sergey Kovalev-Cedric Agnew card in March in Atlantic City, N.J. **4.** Lily Nahuat with Paulie Malignaggi at the Alvarez-Alfredo Angulo card in March at the MGM Grand. **5.** Roberto Ochoa (right) with the late Alexis Arguello in 2008. **6.** Lupe Duran with trainer Ann Wolfe at the Alvarez-Angulo card. **7.** Muslimah McLendon with Mayweather at the J'Leon Love-Vladine Biosse card in February in Verona, N.Y.

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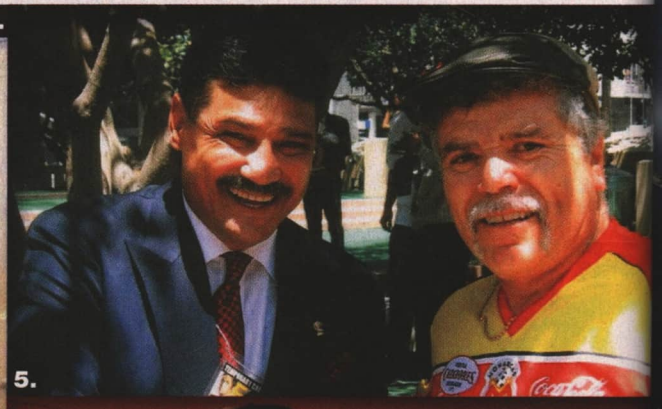

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Send us your photos from a fight with you posing next to a celebrity, athlete, or other famous person and we will consider it for publication in the magazine. Send photos to **celebrityphotos@sepublications.com.** Make sure to include your name(s), celebrity name(s), the fight attended, and your contact information. See you at the fights!

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